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ABSTRACT

One of a series of workplace education modules, this module includes activities and exercises for teaching communication skills in the workplace. First, introductory material reviews the goals of the module and defines three levels of difficulty of module activities (i.e., beginner, intermediate, and advanced). The importance of communication skills in the workplace is then discussed and issues related to setting up a classroom environment and assessment are addressed. The bulk of the module then presents 76 activities in the following 9 topic areas: (1) the role of perception in the communication process; (2) the importance of listening; (3) expressing ideas clearly; (4) awareness of the effects of positive, negative, and constructive feedback; (5) team communication skills; (6) conflict management or negotiation skills; (7) customer service skills, including considerations related to voice quality, active listening, and problem-solving; (8) presentation skills, including effective public speaking; and (9) intercultural communication skills, including awareness of one's own and other cultures, nonverbal communication techniques, and language simplification. Each activity includes a description of intended learning goals, the difficulty level, the recommended group size, the time needed, and necessary materials. (HAA)

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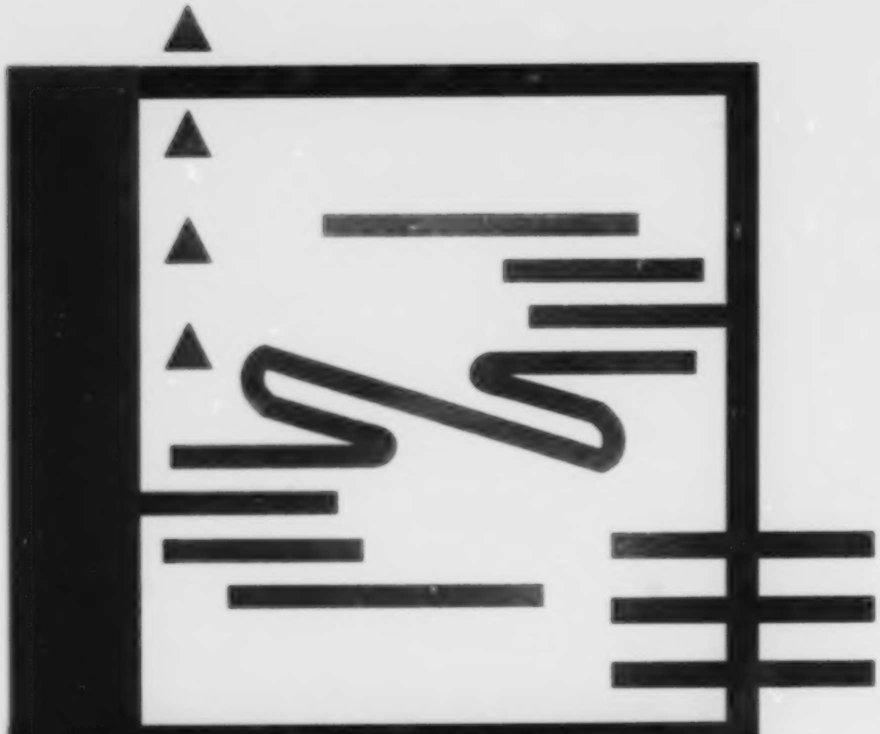

Messages, Meanings, And Minestrone:

THE COMMUNICATION COOKBOOK

By
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Messages, Meanings, and Minestrone:

Communication Cookbook

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About the Cookbook

This cookbook has been set up to provide for flexibility and creativity in developing and delivering a wide array of communication classes.

The activities within this cookbook have been divided into nine topic areas: Perception, Listening, Expressing Yourself, Feedback, Team Communication, Conflict Management/Negotiation, Customer Service, Presentation Skills, and Intercultural Communication. There is an introduction to each topic area which outlines the importance and relevance of the topic and provides additional suggestions to the instructor.

The order of the topics within the cookbook represents a gradual increase from the most basic communication concepts to the most complex. Thus, before teaching a class in Intercultural Communication, it may be useful for the instructor to use several of the activities from earlier sections to provide needed background in the basic ingredients of communication (e.g. listening and perception).

Within each topic area, each activity stands alone and has its own learning objectives. The sequence of the activities within a topic area is not meant to provide a lesson plan -- the instructor should mix and match the activities depending upon the main course he or she is intending to serve. Although each topic area can be viewed as its own course, many interesting and palatable courses may be designed by mixing and matching activities from all areas. Activities are numbered to assist the instructor in removing and replacing the individual activities.

Within each activity certain terms are used consistently. **Learning Objectives** are what we intend for the student to have learned by participating in the activity. The **Levels** (beginning, intermediate, and advanced) are outlined on the following page of this cookbook. **Variations** offer some different ways of performing the activity that will attain the same learning objectives. The variations given may also help an instructor adapt the activity to reach a different audience or to adapt to different subject matter. Finally, the **Remarks** section provides additional insight into some of the potential areas of discussion which may arise during and after the activity.

The majority of these activities have been tested in health care, service, and manufacturing environments. As always, it should be up to the discretion of the instructor to decide when and where the activities will be appropriate.

Definition of Levels

- Beginner Level

Exercises and activities in this group are ones that "raise awareness" of communication issues and skills. Exercises would include "discussion activities" of communication topics.

These are primarily activities that could be used in advanced ESL courses.

An example of a beginner level activity:

Why Listen? This activity raises students awareness of "listening" as an active (not passive) pursuit. From this activity, information on what makes someone an effective listener is generated by the class.

■ Intermediate Level

Exercises and activities in this group are ones that allow students to practice a specific communication skill and/or allow for observation of a specific communication skill by another student.

An example of an intermediate level activity:

Constructive Feedback Role-Play. Student is using a prescribed strategy to give constructive feedback in a role-play situation. Another student is receiving the feedback; the third is observing the role-play.

◆ Advanced Level

Exercises and activities in this group are ones that require students to focus on practicing and/or observing more than one communication skill. Often, these will be "cumulative" or "synthesizing" exercises where students will be asked to use many of the communication skills from a class.

An example of an advanced level activity:

Group Meeting Simulation. Each student is required to do the following four things: 1) Encourage others to participate, 2) Express ideas clearly, 3) Give positive feedback on others' good ideas, and 4) Ask questions for clarification. At the end of the simulated meeting, students are asked to evaluate their own participation.

Preface

Communication is important because relationships are important. The quality of communication with co-workers, with family members, with friends, and with our neighbors is what makes relationships work or not work. Communication is the nutrient for healthy, meaningful relationships. The quality of our relationships is directly related to the quality of our lives. Since "relationships with others lie at the very core of human existence,"[1] what topic could be more important than communication?

This cookbook provides the ingredients and recipes necessary for teaching essential communication skills. Every activity within this cookbook exists to provide students with skills which will enable them to create, build and maintain productive and meaningful relationships. In *Messages, Meaning and Minestrone: The Communication Cookbook*, the following types of communication are addressed: interpersonal communication, intrapersonal communication, small group communication, organizational communication, mass communication, public speaking, and intercultural communication. The majority of the activities are written from an interpersonal communication perspective as this type of communication seems to be the most relevant to students in their daily lives.

Setting up a classroom environment

In a communication class, by nature of the subject matter and the importance of student participation, it is essential that a comfortable, open learning environment is established in the first class. A number of the activities in this cookbook may be used as icebreakers, which assist in initiating the tone and atmosphere of the class. Time should be spent up front discovering and discussing students' expectations for the class and their personal and/or professional goals for improving communication skills. In most environments, it is important for students to decided upon "ground rules" for the class. These will differ from environment to environment and from class to class; however, confidentiality is one ground rule which should be addressed with the group. If confidentiality has not been established in the first class, students may be reluctant to share relevant experiences, to participate fully and to practice new skills. The teacher of a communication class carries the responsibility of following the ground rules and modeling the communication skills being learned throughout the course of the class.

Assessment

Assessment of communication skills has proven to be one of the most significant challenges for instructors of this "soft skill". How do we quantitatively measure improvements in listening? in conflict management? in giving constructive feedback? One method is to have students self-assess their skills; however, this type of assessment is highly subjective. Another method of assessment is teacher observation, which is limited to the classroom environment and does not allow for assessment of the transferability of skills. To assess communication skills outside of the classroom, a supervisor or a peer may be an appropriate observer. The objectivity of supervisor and peer assessment is, however, highly suspect since it depends on the nature of these people's relationship with the student. For example, if a supervisor wishes to maintain an authoritative role, an employee's new found skill in giving feedback may not be seen as a desired result. Each instructor should fully understand the organizational culture before determining which methods of assessment will be most appropriate.

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[1] Kelley, Harold H., *Close Relationships*, Chapter 1-Berscheid and Peplau, "The Emerging Science of Relationships" (New York: WH Freeman, 1983).

Conclusion

Communication is all about messages and their meanings. The goal of this cookbook is to provide teachers with a variety of activities and ideas to mix, blend and experiment with in order to create a "menu" that will appeal to students in different environments. We hope that you will enjoy the offerings herein, and that you will become as creative and skillful in designing classes as your students will become in the practice of their communication skills.

Bon appetit!

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Perception

Is communication what a person says (or thought he/she said) or is it what the listener hears (or thought he/she heard)?

When communicating, most people tend to assume that the other person understands what they are saying and where they are coming from. However, everyone is different, and everyone perceives the world differently and interprets things differently. Conclusions, assumptions, and inferences based on our perceptions suddenly become "facts" that we act on. Common misunderstandings between co-workers, friends, or spouses are the result. To be an effective communicator one should try to understand the other person's inner self--how they perceive the world and where they are coming from.

The activities in this section are designed to raise awareness of the important role perception can play in the communication process. Visual activities demonstrate how we often see things differently as well as how we selectively perceive things based on their relative importance. Additional activities focus on how easily we draw inferences and make assumptions based on limited information and our perception of the person or situation.

Developing the awareness that our perceptions can direct how and what we say often leads to improved communication skills in our personal and professional lives. We are more able to see things from the other person's point of view as well as frame our opinions, ideas, and interests in a way that is understandable to others.

Encourage students to reflect on their perceptions in all communication situations and students will not only develop more effective communication skills, but also develop improved critical thinking skills as well.

DRAW!

Learning Goals:

- To encourage self-reflection in situations where differences in perception can lead to misunderstandings

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask the students to draw a cartoon about a misunderstanding that was due to perception that they have experienced. Write on the board: "Think about a time when another person had a totally different view of a situation than you did--a time when he/she had a different perception. Draw a picture or a cartoon of this experience!"

***Discussion Questions**

1. What did you draw? Why?
2. What types of miscommunication are represented?
3. Are misunderstandings often the result of differences in perception?

***Variations** If students are comfortable, a short "show-and-tell" of their cartoons can be a fun and informative way to share their experiences.

Remarks: This is a great kinesthetic exercise for those who like to draw. However, those who do not consider themselves artists may be intimidated by this. Use care in encouraging students to share their cartoons and experiences. This activity works well for reflecting on misunderstandings that were due to perception. Many of the cartoons we read in the newspaper provide additional examples of perceptual problems. Try collecting a few cartoons to share with the class before they begin this exercise. Also, make sure to draw your own cartoon! This activity can be utilized for many subject areas in addition to communication, including writing, reading, and even math.

References: None

VISUAL EXERCISES

Learning Goals:

- To increase awareness that everyone perceives the world differently
- To increase awareness that we selectively perceive those things that are important to us and fail to perceive those things that are not important to us

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 5 - 10 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Overhead *Once in a Life Time*
Overhead *Count the F's*

Learning Activity:

Place the "Once in a Life Time" overhead on the projector for a few seconds. Ask the students to tell you what it said. This overhead illustrates selective perception--we tend to overlook those things that are small and unimportant to us (i.e. the repetition of the small words "a" and "the".) Place the "count the F's" overhead on the projector. This overhead illustrates the same point. There are six F's; most people count anywhere from 3-6, tending to overlook the F's in the word "of".

***Discussion Questions**

1. Why do we tend to perceive only certain things?
2. How could this tendency influence communication?

***Variations**

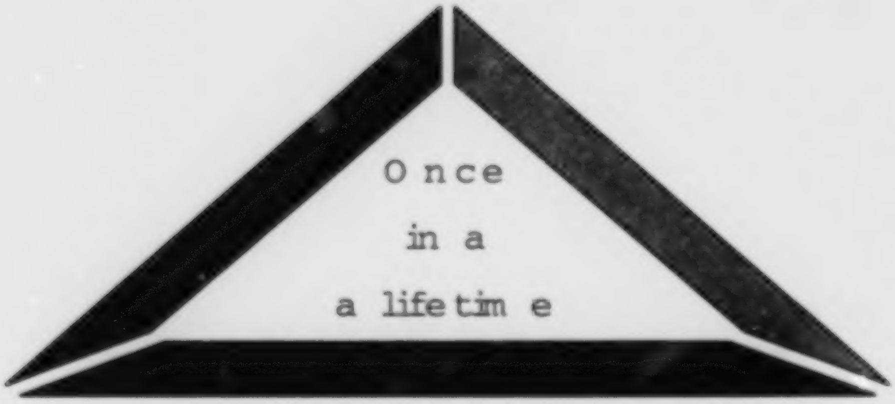
Another way to achieve the learning goals would be to ask if anyone has purchased a car in the last year. Have the students tell you the make, model, and color of the car. Then, ask "How many of these cars have you seen on the road since then?"

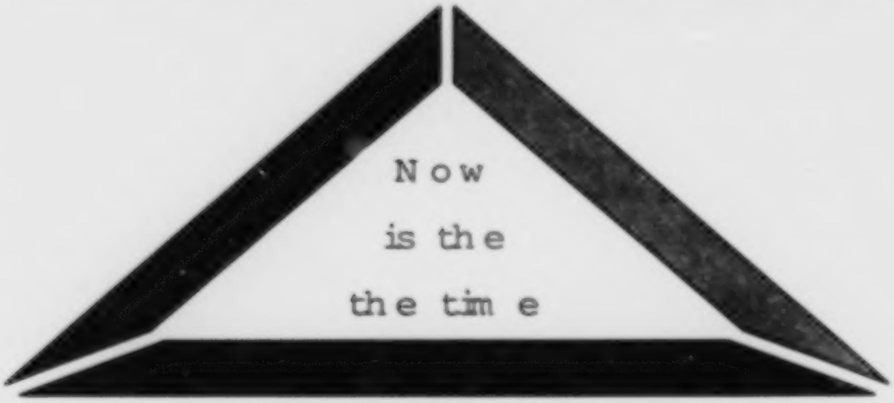
Remarks:

These visual exercises are usually an eye-opener for students and can lead to interesting discussions on perception and how everyone views the world differently. Other conclusions can be drawn from these exercises. For example, people may perceive you differently than you intend and people usually have different views regarding the communication situation and process.

References: None

Perception 2a


Once
in a
a lifetime


Now
is the
the time

Finished files are the result of years of scientific study combined with the experience of many years.

Count the F's in the sentence.
Count them only once.
Do not go back and count them again.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Learning Goals:

- To increase awareness that the words we choose to use may be perceived differently than we intend

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 10 - 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Prepare a handout or overhead with the following questions:

1. The senator was elected to office by an "overwhelming majority." What percentage of the vote did he receive?
2. My 17-year-old brother is of "average" height. How tall is he?
3. Jane really isn't a "brain," but she is a good student. What is her grade point average?
4. Uncle Ned is a "moderate smoker." How many cigarettes a day does he smoke?
5. Although this friend of mine is not wealthy, he earns a "comfortable living." How much does he make a year?

Learning Activity:

Ask each student to answer the questions individually. Review their answers--they will all be different.

***Discussion Questions**

1. Why were the answers to each of the questions different?

2. What are other areas we might have different perceptions about?

***Variations**

For a slightly different variation, ask students to think of as many meanings as they can for different words such as "out," "fire," fix," etc. They will find that the English language has much more than just one definition for each word, leaving a lot to individual interpretation.

Remarks:	This activity can lead to an interesting discussion on the disparity between what we say, how we think our words have been understood, and, in reality, how our communication has been received.
References:	None

ANALYZING PERCEPTIONS OF OTHERS

Learning Goals:
- To recognize differences in perceptions
- To analyze the perceptions of others

Level: ■

Group Size: 5 to 10 students

Time: 40 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Pull an advertisement out of a magazine with pictures of people in it.

Learning Activity:

Ask three volunteers to leave the classroom. Outside of the room, show them the advertisement. They are not allowed to discuss it with one another. Have the learners re-enter the room one at a time and describe the advertisement to the class. On the basis of their descriptions, the class is to form a mental picture of the people in the advertisement. As each volunteer describes the ad, class members are to write down five adjectives about the person or persons in the picture. When all three students have finished describing their ads, the instructor shows the ad to the entire class.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What were the differences among the three descriptions?

2. Which of the three descriptions helped you form the most accurate picture? How did your image differ from the actual picture? How can you account for the differences?

3. Now that you have seen the picture, write five adjectives Did your five adjectives which describe the person or persons in the picture change after you actually saw the picture? If so how and why?

*** Variations** The pictures can be from any source.

Remarks: To improve social perception: actively question the accuracy of your perceptions; seek more information to verify your perceptions; talk with the people about whom you are forming the perceptions; realize that perceptions of people need to change over time; and check perceptions verbally before proceeding.

References:

Verderber, Rudolph and Verderber, Kathleen S. *Inter-Act: Using Interpersonal Communication Skills*. 6th ed. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, 1992.

PERCEPTIONS IN COMMUNICATION

Learning Goals:
- To introduce the concept that perceptions frame communication

Level: ●

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 10 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Read the following short story to the students:

> It was the traditional Christmas party at ABC Corporation and all employees were invited. This occasion was Terry's first chance to meet many of the new employees. As people were chatting, Terry's eyes were drawn to a person on the opposite side of the room. Slowly, Terry moved through the room in the direction to talk with this person.
>
> (read only once)

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Is the person moving across the room male or female?
2. Why is Terry moving across the room to talk to this person?
3. What does this activity reveal about the role of perception in communication?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: None

References:

Verderber, Rudolph and Verderber, Kathleen S. *Inter-Act: Using Interpersonal Communication Skills*. 6th ed. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, 1992.

WRITE!

Learning Goals:
- To increase awareness of misunderstandings in communication through self-reflection

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 10 - 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask the students to write about their communication experiences. Write the following prompt on the board: "Think about a time when you did not share meaning with another person. Describe the situation. Was the misunderstanding because of the people? The environment? Differences in perception? Other distractions?"

***Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss students' responses to the questions.
2. What was the main cause for the misunderstandings? List the causes on the board.

***Variations**

This activity can be utilized for many subject areas from a variety of communication topics to writing, reading, and even math.

Remarks: This writing exercise is an excellent metacognitive activity, which allows students to reflect on different communication situations. Students learn to analyze communication situations and the responsibilities of the different people involved.

References: None

MISCOMMUNICATION DISCUSSION

Learning Goals:

- To evaluate why miscommunication occurs
- To develop awareness of personal responsibility in improving communication

Level: ●

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask the students to write about a co-worker or supervisor with whom they have difficulty communicating or with whom they often have misunderstandings or differences in perception. Students may work in pairs or you may lead a group discussion on the following:

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Why do you have a communication problem with this person? What are the causes?
2. Do you think this person feels that *you* are difficult to communicate with?
3. How would better communication with this person impact both your jobs?
4. What could *you* do to improve communication with this person?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity promotes self-awareness and reflection. It also helps students to see the benefits of improving communication. Set some ground rules for this discussion; it is not productive for students to name specific co-workers or supervisors. This activity is a good lead-in to an activity or discussion on differences in perception.

References: None

Listening

Listening is an underrated communication skill. It is one skill that is taken for granted since we have used it all of our lives. When teaching listening, it is important to establish an awareness of listening as a skill and its vital role in the communication process. Listening is a reflective skill associated with observing while speaking is an active skill associated with doing. In this context, listening might be considered to be a "passive" activity. However, an effective listener is actively engaged in processing information received. Speaking and listening are equally important elements in the communication process as doing and observing are equal partners in the learning process.[2]

Several of the activities in this section are intended to raise awareness of listening's importance and to provide students an opportunity to self-assess their skills in this area. Once the awareness of listening as a skill has been established and learners have an idea of their competency in this area, we can start to practice active listening.

The practice activities include: focusing attention on the speaker, listening to instructions, listening to understand, paraphrasing the speaker's thoughts, listening and interpreting nonverbal messages. As an instructor, you may also use these activities to assess students' skills on an on-going basis.

Developing active listening as a skill reduces miscommunication in our personal and professional lives. Applications for active listening in both arenas include:

- Receiving instructions and directions
- Understanding varying points of view
- Receiving feedback
- Participating effectively in group meetings
- Processing information
- Showing interest in others' ideas and opinions

As a teacher, you should help students to see these applications and encourage them to use active listening at home, in their communities, and at work.

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[2] McCarthy, Bernice. *4MAT System: Teaching to Learning Styles with Right/Left Mode Techniques*. Barrington, IL: Excel, Inc., 1987.

60-SECOND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Learning Goals:	• To illustrate that effective listening cannot be done while talking
Level:	●
Group Size:	2 or more students
Time:	5 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	Stopwatch

Learning Activity:

Ask students to find a partner and stand up facing their partner. Give them the following instructions: "You have 60 seconds to tell your partner as much as you can about your life--in essence, your autobiography. The time limit for this exercise is 60 seconds--not 60 seconds a piece. As such, to get as much information in as you can, you will need to continue talking at the same time for the full 60 seconds."

***Discussion Questions**	1. What happened? Why? What is the point? How does this apply?
***Variations**	None

Remarks:	This activity is an excellent icebreaker for a class that discusses listening skills. A brief discussion afterwards leads to the conclusion that "you can't talk and listen at the same time." It is not only a useful icebreaker for listening or communication classes, but is also a useful warm-up for any training session since it emphasizes that students should listen to one another--one at a time.
References:	None

WHY LISTEN?

Learning Goals:	• To increase understanding that listening is not a passive but rather an active communication skill that can assist us in many ways
Level:	●
Group Size:	Any
Time:	10 - 20 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	None

Learning Activity:

Ask the students to write about effective listening. A sample prompt may be, "Why listen? How can listening effectively help you at work? At home? Think of as many ways as you can. What makes it hard for you to be an effective listener?" Record the students' responses on a flip chart as "Reasons to Listen." These can be typed up and distributed as a follow-up handout at the next class.

***Discussion Questions** 1. Discuss students' responses to the writing exercise.

***Variations** The writing portion of this activity can be used for many subject areas, including communication, reading, writing, and math.

Remarks: The writing exercise gives students a chance to reflect on their own reasons for listening as well as their own listening habits. The follow-up handout is an excellent resource to increase students' awareness of the many reasons for listening as well as to increase their motivation for trying to improve their listening skills.

References:

Bone, Diane. *The Business of Listening*. Los Altos, CA: Crisp Publications, Inc., 1988.

COSTS OF POOR LISTENING

Learning Goals:

- To discuss the costs of poor listening and to illustrate that ineffective listening can have consequences

Level: ●

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 10 - 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Prepare case studies or scenarios related to the specific organization

Learning Activity:

Ask students to form small groups. Assign each group a separate case study to read and analyze. Each group should prepare answers to the following questions. Each group should then present their case study and their answers to the large group with discussion to follow.

***Discussion Questions**

1. What happened?
2. What blocked the person from listening effectively?
3. What were the costs of poor listening?
4. How could this problem have been avoided?

***Variations** None

Remarks: This activity only works if the case studies or scenarios are realistic for the organization. Careful attention should be paid to preparing case studies that illustrate the costs of poor listening within the organizational environment.

References: None

THE LISTENING STICK

Learning Goals:	• To increase awareness of the problems involved in high-level listening and concentration • To practice a high level of listening and concentration
Level:	■
Group Size:	4 or more students
Time:	20 - 30 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	An interesting "listening stick" for each group

Learning Activity:

Ask students to form groups of four or more. Give each group a listening stick and refer to the following rules (on flipchart or overhead):

1. Only the person holding the stick may talk.
2. The person may speak on any topic he/she wishes.
3. No one may interrupt the speaker.
4. When the speaker chooses, he/she passes the stick in mid-sentence to another person in the group. The choice of the next person must be random.
5. Upon receiving the stick, the person must paraphrase what the previous speaker has said, continue with the same topic for at least 3 sentences, and then, if desired, change to a new topic.

End the exercise after about 5 minutes or after each person in the group has had one or two turns.

***Discussion Questions**

1. How did you feel? Was it awkward? Why? Did you feel nervous that your listening could be tested at any time?

2. Was it difficult to maintain such a high level of concentration for just 5 minutes?

3. How did such a high level of concentration affect your listening? (Often, such a high level of concentration on words can make it more difficult

to listen to understand.)

***Variations**

This activity can be varied according to the specific needs of the students. Some variations include choosing the topic beforehand and asking students to repeat the last 5-10 words of the previous speaker exactly instead of paraphrasing. Another variation is to play music during the exercise. Be creative, and let the exercise flow--the variations will happen naturally.

Remarks:

This activity can be used at the beginning of a listening segment to illustrate the difficulties in listening. A discussion of listening "blocks" (difficulties) can then follow. The activity can also be used at the end of a listening segment to put the skills taught into practice. It is a fun way to illustrate the effort that needs to be made when listening with a high level of concentration. A simple list of listening "do's" and "don'ts" can be made from the students experience as well.

References:

None

INTRODUCTIONS

Learning Goals:
- To develop awareness of listening as a skill
- To learn about other students

Level: ●

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 10 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Have students pair up. Each student tells partner about him/herself for two minutes. Afterwards, students switch roles. At this point ask each student to introduce his/her partner to the class. After the introduction, ask the student being introduced if there's anything else that he/she would like to add.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Would you have listened differently if you had known you were going to be asked to introduce your partner? How? What would you have done?

2. Did anyone have a difficult time listening to the introductions? Why? Were you thinking about what you were going to say?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This is a good introductory activity for any class and especially for communication. Students start to self-assess their own listening skills in a relaxed, informal manner.

References: None

TAKING THE DAY OFF

Learning Goals:
- To improve listening skills
- To learn about the job responsibilities of another class member

Level: ●

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Listening to Understand*

Learning Activity:

Divide the class into groups of two. In each group, one participant will be "taking the day off tomorrow" and will need to explain to the other participant exactly what he/she will need to do to complete that person's job in his/her absence. The listener should practice the skills mentioned on the *Listening to Understand* handout. Switch roles. Observe the pairs as they do the role-play and discuss observations after activity.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Speakers: How well did you feel you were being listened to? What were the indications?

2. Listeners: Do you feel you were listening "differently" than you normally do?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This role-play serves a dual purpose. It enables students to practice listening skills and it familiarizes them with the job duties of another participant in the class.

References: None

Listening to Understand

Show interest in what
the other person has
to say!

Ask questions to
clarify what you
have heard!

Let the other person
know what you
understand!

HAND TO CHIN

Learning Goals:

- To increase awareness that people send mixed messages
- To illustrate the power of nonverbal communication

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 5 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask the students to stand up and stretch out with you for a few minutes. Be sure to stand in front of the group and demonstrate the following as you give them these instructions.

1. First, put your arm parallel to the floor.
2. Second, make a circle with your thumb and forefinger.
3. Third, place the circle you have made firmly on your chin.

The hitch to this exercise is that you must bring your hand to your cheek instead of your chin. Watch and see how many students follow your actions instead of your words. Lead the students into a discussion of the three forms of your communication message: words, voice, and nonverbal.

***Discussion Questions**

1. What happened? Why?
2. Why did you follow my actions instead of my words?
3. Do most people believe someone's actions or nonverbal communication over their words? Why?

***Variations** None

Remarks: This short, fun exercise illustrates the impact of nonverbal communication. Be aware that many students will blame themselves for being "fooled" on the premise that they "were not listening." Let them know that is not necessarily the case since you sent them a mixed message. Most people will tend to believe the nonverbal messages over the verbal messages as our nonverbal communication is often harder to control and, therefore, more "real and honest." This exercise can lead to a discussion regarding Alfred Mehrabian's research findings: Words are 7% of the message, voice is 38% of the message, and nonverbal communication is 55% of the message. Students are usually surprised by this fact, but the exercise they have just been through usually provides some proof.

References:

Bone, Diane. *The Business of Listening*. Los Altos, CA: Crisp Publications, Inc., 1988.

THE MINEFIELD ACTIVITY

Learning Goals:

- To improve listening skills
- To recognize which aspects of listening are most important
- To recognize interdependence

Level: ●

Group Size: 10 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Create a minefield by pulling chairs, books, folders, or any other objects into a section of the room. Set up a challenging course without a direct path.

Learning Activity:

Have students introduce themselves to someone else in the room and pair up. Pairs are to line up on either side of the minefield. One person closes his or her eyes. The other person verbally guides him or her through the minefield. Students cannot touch one another. The goal is to get to the other side without stepping on any mines and without running into anyone else. Once they've gotten to the other side, switch. It doesn't matter at which end of the minefield students start.

Ask for a volunteer to demonstrate the exercise.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. How did it feel to be the one with your eyes closed?
2. How did it feel to be the one who had to guide the other person through?
3. What helped you or didn't help you get to the other side?
4. What, from this exercise, can you apply to your job?

*** Variations** If you have an exceptionally large group, you can set up two minefields.

Remarks: We all feel, at one time or another, that we are totally reliant on someone else to give us the information we need to accomplish a task. We need to be able to communicate clearly, concisely and politely. We need to listen carefully, capture the details, trust and rely on one another to get where we want to go.

References: None

GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE

Learning Goals:

- To provide an opportunity to release tensions
- To encourage participants to surface negative feelings in a safe environment
- To sharpen members' needs for using their listening skills

Level: ●

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 10 - 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask all participants to pair up. Instruct the participants to talk simultaneously, sharing any complaints, reservations, resentments, grievances, irritations, gripes, or concerns they have on their minds. When one member runs out of issues to disclose, he/she should say "grumble, grumble" until all participants are done.

Call a halt to the exercise when it is apparent that the negative energy has dissipated and only superficial "grumbling" is present.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. How did you feel during the exercise? How do you feel now?
2. Did you feel that you were being "heard" during the exercise?
3. What are the benefits of this exercise?
4. What issues did you hear that you feel merit brief discussion?
5. Could you apply this process in the workplace?
6. How do we fall into a "grumble, grumble" trap in our daily conversations? Are these productive?
7. How did this exercise test your listening skills?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: Ask the class to brainstorm productive ways to deal with grumbling.

References:

Scott, Susan. *Still More Games Trainers Play*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991.

TYPES OF RESPONSES

Learning Goals:	• To identify six different types of responses • To discuss the appropriateness of the different response types at work • To identify the styles which demonstrate active listening skills
Level:	●
Group Size:	6 or more students
Time:	20 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	Handout *Styles of Responses* Index cards with questions and comments

Learning Activity:

Discuss the six styles of responses -- avoiding, critiquing, analyzing, questioning, confirming and paraphrasing. Have a student pick an index card and read the questions and comments. Go around in a circle and have the students rephrase the same question in the six different styles.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Which styles do you think would make the speaker feel he/she is being listened to?
2. Which types of responses do you use the most?
3. Which styles of responses are most appropriate for work? Examples?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: The questions and comments on the index cards should be suitable for the work environment (e.g. "Would you be able to cover my shift tomorrow?" "This project has really taken more time than I expected.")

References: None

STYLES OF RESPONSES

- **Avoiding**: Fails to acknowledge what the other person has said.

- **Critiquing**: Involves giving advice or making a judgement.

- **Analyzing**: Involves the listener's interpreting the meaning of a statement

- **Questioning**: Helps the listener to clarify what has been said. Will get more information out of the speaker.

- **Confirming**: Reinforces the positive. Involves pointing out alternative ways for perceiving the situation.

- **Paraphrasing**: Restates what the person has just said. Helps make certain that you understood what the other person said. Clarifies meaning.

Expressing Yourself

"The thinking human being not able to express himself stands at the same level as those who cannot think." - Pericles

In any communication situation, odds of having a "meeting of the minds" are greatly increased if the communicator has the ability to get his or her thoughts and ideas across in an organized and clear fashion.

The activities in this section focus on expressing yourself more effectively with emphasis on understanding whom you are talking to, being specific in what you say, and checking for understanding. These are critical elements of the communication process that are often overlooked or forgotten in the haste of everyday workplace challenges.

When employees are better able to express themselves, they will have more confidence in their interactions with others, be more willing to share their ideas, and give clearer instructions. Employees with this skill become a more valuable asset to the team, the department, and the organization.

PLANNER

Learning Goals:
- To increase awareness of the process of expressing ideas
- To practice the skill of expressing ideas through planning and delivery

Level: ■

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Expressing Your Ideas*

Learning Activity:

Prepare a planning sheet for expressing an idea that includes the following steps:

1. My idea is . . .
2. What will I say to get the attention of my listeners?
3. What is my main point?
4. What can I say to support my main point (i.e. statistics, examples, etc.)
5. What will I say to check for understanding?
6. What will I say to summarize my main point?
7. What action will I suggest?

After students have completed the planning sheet, ask them to pair up and practice expressing their ideas to each other. Partners should give feedback on what went especially well and also give any suggestions for improvement.

***Discussion Questions**
1. What went well?
2. What would you like to improve?

***Variations** None

Remarks: This activity is an excellent opportunity for students to practice their communication skills and receive feedback from their peers. Before students begin practicing, it is useful to highlight delivery tips in the following areas:

1. Nonverbal communication/body language: use eye

contact, show confidence, avoid distracting mannerisms, and let your body mirror your feelings.

2. Voice: speak clearly and firmly, vary your voice, be aware of tone, avoid fillers, and speak with confidence.
3. Words: remember whom you are talking to, avoid phrases like "I think" or "I guess," use powerful, positive words.

A variety of delivery tips can be discussed in relation to this exercise. Time availability and group skill level will often determine the depth at which to discuss these tips.

References: None

Expressing Your Ideas

✓ Get attention

- ➢ How? Begin by saying something you know will capture the audience's undivided attention. Remember: People give their attention to things that are important to them.
  - ❶ "I've got an idea that could save us six or seven hours a week."
  - ❷ "I can show you how to save more money."

✓ State your main point

- ➢ How? Clearly state the point you want the listener to remember.
  - ❶ "I'd like to see a meeting at the beginning of each shift."
  - ❷ "The number of customer complaints has gone down since..."

✓ Present organized support

- ➢ How? What specific information will support what you are trying to say? What facts, examples, statistics will help your listener understand and agree with you?
  - ❶ "8 out of 10 people in the department are stating that instructions are not being communicated clearly enough."
  - ❷ "April results show that customer calls are down by 15%. That is the month we implemented..."

✓ Check for understanding and reactions

- ➢ How? Ask open or closed-ended questions to determine if the listener understood you or needs more information.
  - ❶ "What do you think about this proposal for brief meetings?"
  - ❷ "Do you understand how the new system relates to the decrease in customer calls?"

✓ Summarize your main point

- ➢ How? Briefly restate your main points. Be clear and concise.
  - ❶ "As I said, meetings should be held at the beginning of each shift to explain instructions more thoroughly."
  - ❷ "In summary, the new system we have implemented has greatly decreased customer calls."

✓ Recommend action

- ➢ How? If action needs to be taken, the best approach is to recommend action in the form of a suggestion or proposal.
  - ❶ "Based on these facts, I propose we begin holding brief meetings next week."
  - ❷ "On the basis of the results I've described, I would suggest that we continue to ..."

INSTRUCTIONS PLANNER

Learning Goals:

- To increase awareness of the process of giving instructions
- To practice the skill of giving instructions through planning and delivery

Level: ■

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: A planning sheet

Learning Activity:

Prepare a "giving instructions" planning sheet. It could include the following steps: the task, technical or new words, when the task should be done, materials needed to complete the task, overall goal, expected result, main steps in performing the task, and warnings or safety issues. Ask students to complete the planning sheet. Then, in pairs, ask students to give each other their instructions. Partners should give each other constructive feedback and suggestions.

***Discussion Questions**

1. What was needed to complete the task?
2. What was the expected result of the task?
3. Were you given enough information to complete the task?

***Variations** None

Remarks: This activity is a good practice session. It is often necessary to explain to students that they are not necessarily going to sit down at work and fill out a planning sheet for giving instructions. However, it is a good "in-class" learning process that helps them retain the skills they have learned as well as increase their awareness of all the steps needed when giving instructions.

References: None

DRAW THIS!

Learning Goals:
- To illustrate that effective communication is the responsibility of both the speaker and the listener
- To recognize the importance of checking for understanding
- To illustrate that assumptions cannot be made about the listener's understanding of vocabulary, terminology, and jargon
- To identify tips and suggestions for giving and following instructions

Level: ■

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Attached handouts with geometric shapes

Learning Activity:

Ask students to pair up and sit back to back with their partner. Ask one person in each pair to take out a piece of paper and a pencil. Inform them that they will be the ones following instructions in this first round. Then, distribute handout 3a to the other partners. Let them know that they will be the ones giving instructions in this first round. Brief the group on the following:

1. The person with the handouts is to have his/her partner draw the same shapes that are on the handout.
2. The person giving instructions may not show his/her partner what is on the piece of paper.
3. The partners must remain sitting back to back.
4. The students following directions may not speak or show their work to their partner.

When the instructions have been given, let the students compare drawings and discuss what happened. Then prepare for the second round. Ask partners to switch roles, and distribute handout 3b to the person who will be giving instructions. The rules are the same except for #4: the person following instructions may now speak freely and ask questions. After they have finished, allow them to compare drawings again. Lead them into a discussion on the importance of two-way communication. Then write on the flipchart the answers to discussion questions #2 and #3. Try reinforcing this activity with a planning sheet for giving instructions (see Expressing Yourself Activity #2).

***Discussion Questions**

1. What happened? Why?
2. What did the people giving instructions do especially well? What could they have done to make their instructions easier to follow?
3. What did the people following instructions do especially well? What could they have done to make sure they understood the instructions?

***Variations**

None

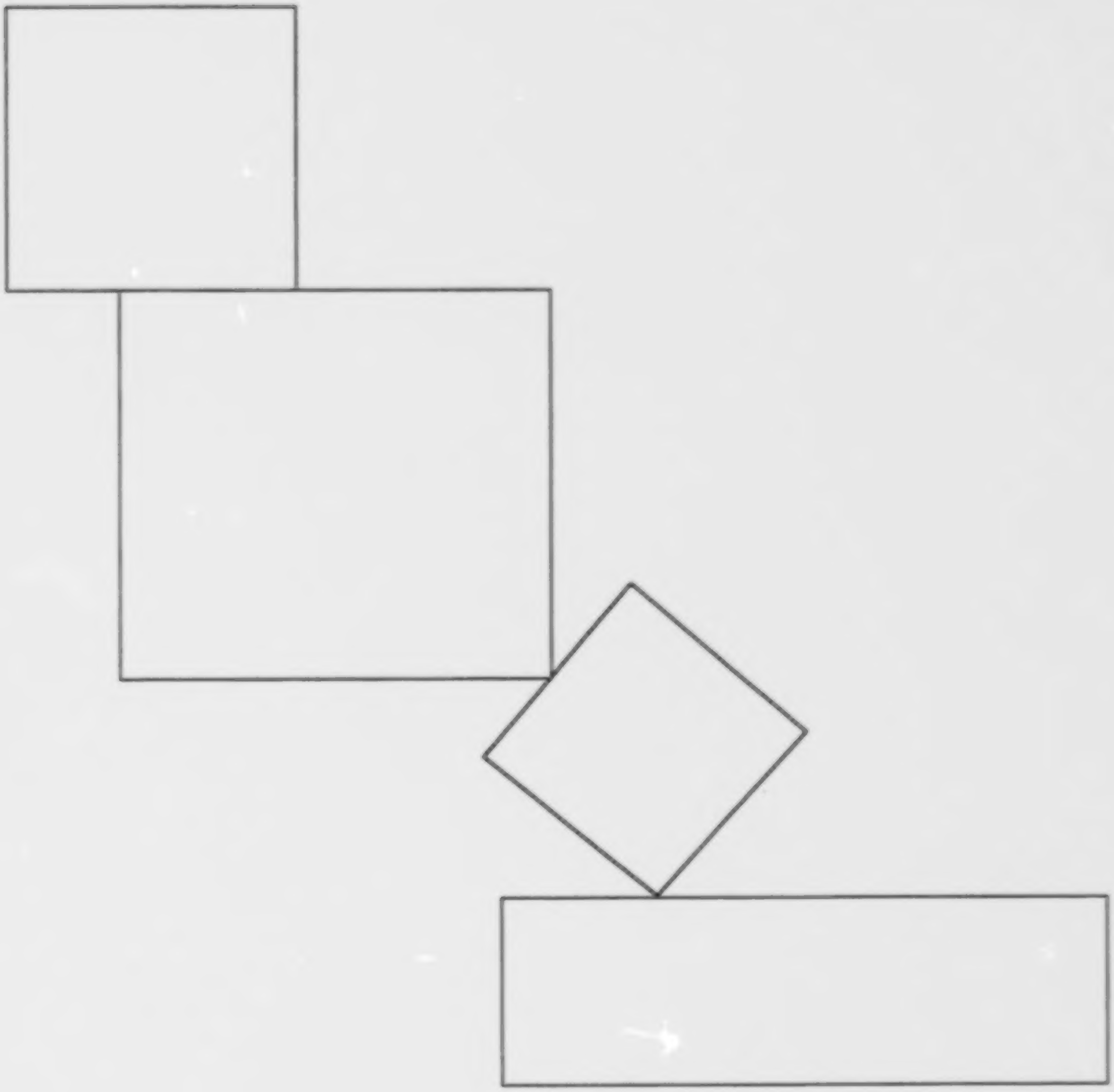
Remarks:

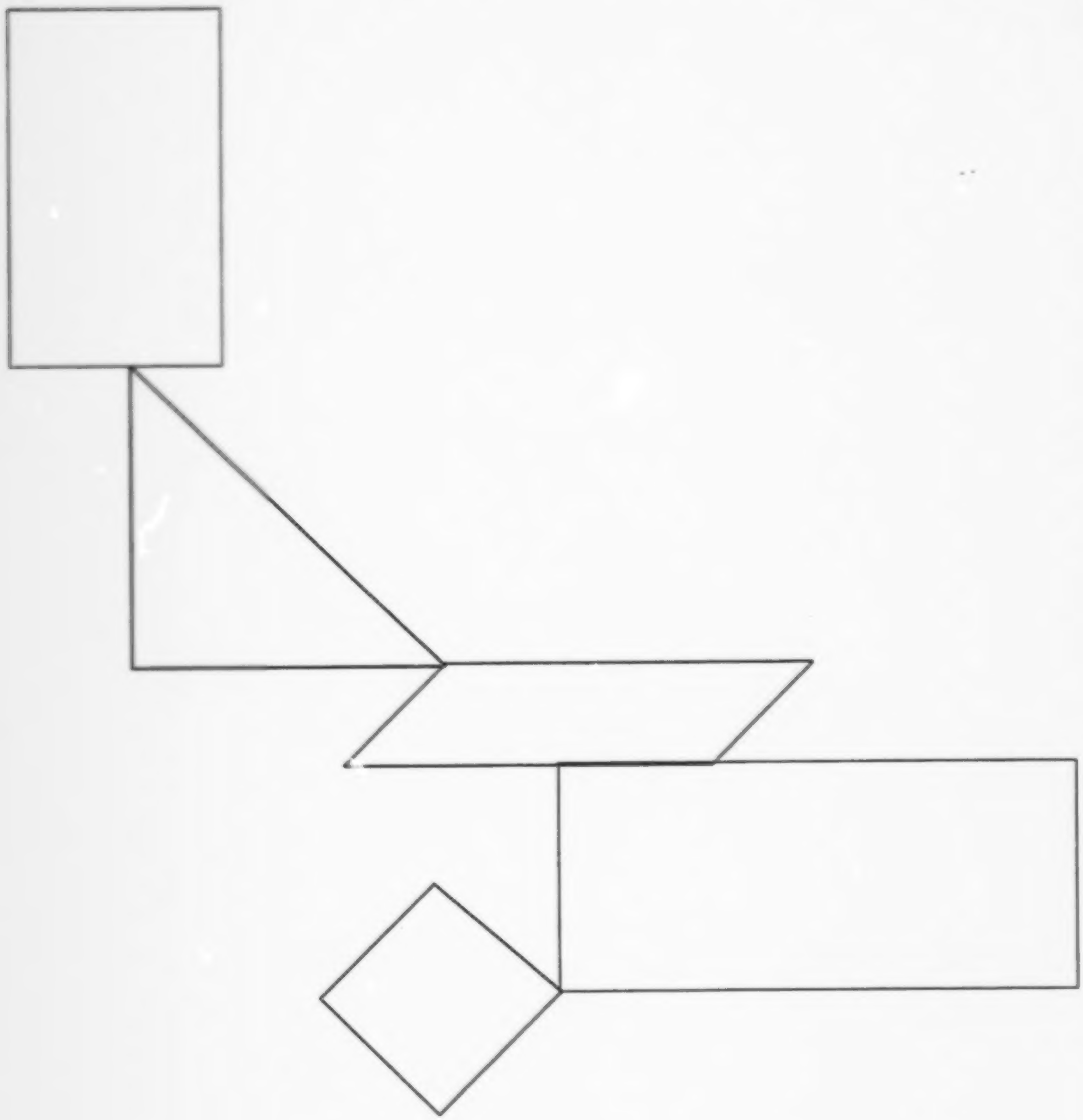
This activity provides different elements of confusion and difficulty every time it is done. The points that should be emphasized are the following:

1. Giving instructions: organize yourself and order the tasks before giving instructions; establish a friendly climate; be specific and clear; check for understanding; give step-by-step instructions; follow-up to see if things are being done correctly; give the "big picture" and overall goal before beginning; and use terms/vocabulary your audience will understand.
2. Following instructions: focus your attention; listen for the main ideas; visualize; ask questions; take notes; repeat back what you understand; and avoid making assumptions or jumping to conclusions.

References:

Bishop, Sue and Taylor, David. *Fifty Activities for Interpersonal Skills Training.* Amherst, Mass.: HRD Press, 1992.





COMMUNICATION DISCUSSION

Learning Goals:
- To define communication and determine why it's important
- To identify the repercussions of poor communication and differences in perception

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Have students write down what they consider to be the definition of communication. List their responses on the board.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What is communication?
2. What different types of communication exist in the workplace? at home? (i.e. written, nonverbal, oral, etc.)
3. Why is effective communication so important?
4. What might be some of the repercussions of miscommunication in the workplace? at home?

*** Variations** Bring in a section of the classified ads and have students note how often communication skills are referred to in the job offerings.

Remarks: This activity helps to establish the importance of embarking on the study and practice of effective communication.

References: None

Feedback

Feedback is a response to a situation, behavior, or action. Feedback can be divided into three categories: positive, negative, and constructive. If feedback is not given, an individual does not know if he/she is doing a good, bad, or adequate job. "Feedback is information that lets us know whether we are on or off track."[3] Many of the books about feedback are written for managers and supervisors. However, in the workplace, it is important for every employee to have the skills to both give and receive feedback in order to create and sustain productive work relationships. When participating in the activities in this section, students will recognize that feedback is a central factor in building and maintaining relationships.

Introductory activities center around increasing awareness of the results of the three types of feedback. Students may use negative feedback and be unaware that its results can have long-term detrimental effects. The main purpose of these introductory activities is to help students focus on what the **goal** of the feedback is. Typically the goal is to improve a relationship or to see a change in behavior. The intermediate and advanced level activities primarily focus on role-plays which provide students with a realistic, yet safe environment in which to practice their skills.

The applications for giving and receiving feedback are vast. Some specific areas where feedback skills can be used in the workplace are group meetings, one-on-one meetings, job evaluations and peer reviews. Mastering this particular communication skill will enable employees to be more participatory and active in their work environments.

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[3] Maurer, Rick. *Feedback Toolkit: 16 Tools for Better Communication in the Workplace*, Portland, Oregon: Productivity Press, 1994.

FEEDBACK IDENTIFICATION

Learning Goals:	• To define the three types of feedback
Level:	●
Group Size:	Any
Time:	10 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	None

Learning Activity:

As a class come up with a definition for feedback. Write the definition on the board. Then, have the class discuss the three main types of feedback: positive, negative and constructive. For each type of feedback, have the class do a short role-play to clarify the meaning of each type of feedback for the class. (Some examples for role-play: A person is always late for meetings, a co-worker accepts a job but leaves it unfinished, a co-worker takes the initiative on starting a research project, etc.)

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Which type of feedback is most common in your workplace?
2. Which type of feedback do you prefer to receive?
3. Which type is the most useful?
4. What is the goal of each type of feedback? What is the result that will be achieved?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This is a good introductory activity for the topic of feedback.

References: None

RESULTS OF NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

Learning Goals:
- To define negative feedback
- To recognize the results of negative feedback

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask the class to define negative feedback. Have the students volunteer to role-play a negative feedback example (e.g. employee A is always late to work, employee B comments on this behavior.) Then, have students write about how they feel when negative feedback is directed towards them (yelling, blaming, accusing, criticizing, etc.)

*** Discussion Questions**

1. How do you feel when you receive negative feedback?
2. Does negative feedback usually cause you to change the behavior that prompted the feedback?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity works well before facilitating a discussion on constructive feedback. It helps to establish that negative feedback does not produce the results desired and prepares students to look for better options.

References: None

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK ROLE-PLAY

Learning Goals:

- To understand why and when to give constructive feedback
- To learn the basic techniques of giving and receiving constructive feedback

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 30 - 40 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Constructive Feedback*
Handout *Giving Constructive Feedback*

Learning Activity:

Ask students to think of someone at work or at home to whom they would like to give constructive feedback. Have them use the "Giving Constructive Feedback" handout to develop a plan for the corrective discussion. Have students form pairs. One of them gives the feedback while the other practices active listening. When the students have completed the role-play, have them switch roles. Observe the students and take notes on their use of the basic techniques.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Do you think you could now give constructive feedback to this person?
2. What is the reason/goal of the feedback?
3. Would this reason/goal be achieved?

*** Variations** If the class is large, have the students divide into groups of three and have one of the three be an "observer" who takes notes on the feedback exchange.

Remarks: A good homework assignment for students would be to have them give positive feedback to someone to whom they would like to give constructive feedback.

References: None

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

REASONS

- Increases productivity
- Increases morale
- Prevents grudges from developing
- Improves team development
- Helps individuals learn about themselves
- Values people and relationships

HINTS

- State the purpose
- Describe specifically what you have observed
- Describe your reactions to what you have observed
- Check for understanding and give the other person a chance to respond
- Offer helpful ideas when appropriate
- Summarize and show your support

BARRIERS

- Fear of offending someone
- Fear of revenge
- Worry about being wrong
- Anticipation of a negative reaction
- Worry about damaging relationship
- "It's not my job..."
- "I don't want to rock the boat..."

Giving Constructive Feedback

➡ What is the purpose of giving this feedback?

➡ Describe specifically what you have observed.

➡ What is your reaction?

➡ What ideas do you have that might be helpful?

➡ How can you show your support and end on a positive note?

POSITIVE FEEDBACK ROLE-PLAY

Learning Goals:	• To understand the meaning of positive feedback and what it achieves • To practice giving positive feedback
Level:	■
Group Size:	4 or more students
Time:	20 - 30 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	Handout *Positive Feedback*

Learning Activity:

Define positive feedback as a class. Ask the students to write about a time when they received positive feedback and how it made them feel. Discuss the situations as a group. Divide the class into pairs and have one partner simulate giving positive feedback to someone at work while the other listens. Switch roles.

*** Discussion Questions**	**1.**	Was it easy or difficult to give positive feedback?
	2.	What is the goal of positive feedback?
	3.	Will you try to give positive feedback to someone on the job now? Why/Why not?
*** Variations**		If the class is very large, divide the students into groups of three and have one of the three act as an observer.

Remarks:	None
References:	None

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

REASONS

- Increases Morale
- Builds Team Relationships
- Helps To Focus On The Positive
- Promotes Climate Of Trust
- Increases Chances Behavior Will Continue
- Opens Up Communication

HINTS

- Be Specific
- Describe How Behavior Affected You
- Make It Personal - Use "I" Statements
- Be Genuine

BARRIERS

- Too Busy To Do It
- Uncomfortable
- Don't Think Of It
- Don't Value It
- Don't Know How

PEER EVALUATION

Learning Goals:	• To practice giving and receiving constructive feedback • To practice giving and receiving positive feedback
Level:	◆
Group Size:	2 or more students
Time:	45 minutes - 1 hour
Preparation and Materials:	Handout *Peer Evaluation Worksheet*

Learning Activity:

Distribute the handout. Ask the students to evaluate their job performance. Have them find a partner and role-play the peer evaluation meeting. The students will then exchange their evaluations so that they are receiving their own feedback.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Were you honest?
2. What was most difficult?
3. How would you have felt if you had received this peer evaluation?

*** Variations**

Students could do a peer evaluation of a co-worker in their team, group or department. They would role-play the evaluation in pairs.

Remarks:

This activity increases self-awareness of work habits and practices and increases skills in giving **and** receiving feedback. It is especially important in companies where peer evaluations are part of the review process.

References:

None

PEER EVALUATION WORKSHEET

Employee Name: ____

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Rate on a scale of 5 → 1. 5 being the highest.

Quality of Work	☐	
Quantity of Work	☐	
Task Knowledge	☐	
Team work	☐	
Client Support	☐	
Initiative	☐	

General Comments: ____

POLITELY REFUSING

Learning Goals:
- To practice different strategies of refusing an unfair request or a request that you cannot fulfill politely

Level: ■

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask students to practice politely refusing different requests with a partner. Requests could include the following (customized to the organizational environment):

1. A co-worker's request: "I took your shift a few times last month. Could you trade with me on Friday?" You have other plans for Friday.
2. Your boss' request: "Would you explain the information on the recipe tags to Darlene? She's new here." You are willing to help, but are unsure of the information yourself.
3. A patient's request: "I'd like steamed vegetables and rice with chicken and cheese, but it is not on the menu. Can you get it for me?" You know the cook can prepare the meal, but you are unsure if the patient's diet allows it.
4. A co-worker's request: "Would you mind covering for me for a few minutes while I make an important phone call?" You don't mind covering for her but she seems to ask you to a lot, and it's never for just a few minutes. Plus, you have difficulty getting your own job done.

***Discussion Questions**

1. What were each group's responses the requests?
2. Which responses would be the most effective?

***Variations** One variation on this activity is to ask the participants to think of some of the requests that they are asked often.

Remarks: This is an interesting activity for illustrating the difference between politely refusing a request and just saying "no."

References: None

Team Communication

Many companies are moving from a more hierarchical structure to a team structure. Meaningful contributions from each team member and effective leadership are expectations in the workplace. A group will be unable to function as a team unless there is communication.

Team communication activities help students to see that different styles of communicating equal different strengths from which the team may draw. It may be beneficial to use a Myers-Briggs Type Personality Indicator[4] or a Learning Styles Indicator[5] at the outset of training to help the team see the preferences/differences within their team. Then it would be helpful to structure a few activities around this information so that students will learn to appreciate the contribution of each style to the team.

Follow-up activities focus on developing team communication skills such as reaching consensus, problem solving, participating in group meetings, and facilitating meetings. These activities are primarily simulations and role-plays. Team communication provides an opportunity to reinforce the importance of basic communication skills (listening, expressing yourself, perception) and to build on them.

Team communication skills have applications inside and outside of the workplace. Any area where a person is required to participate in a group (community organizations, church, sports) is one in which team skills can and will be utilized.

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[4] *Myers-Briggs Type Personality Indicator*. Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., 1987.

[5] *Learning Type Measure*. Excel, Inc., 1994.

THE BALL

Learning Goals:
- To see how the participants function as a team
- To introduce the concept of team communication skills

Level: ●

Group Size: 5 or more students

Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: A ball
Handout *Team Communication Skills*

Learning Activity:

Have the students stand up. Give them a ball and the following instructions: "You must pass the ball to every student." Time them. After they've done it once, let them know they must maintain that passing order and improve their performance time. After completing the discussion questions, give students the handout.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. How did you function as a team? Did you work effectively as a team?
2. Was there a leader?
3. How did you communicate decisions made to improve your performance during the activity?
4. After doing this activity, what characteristicis do you think would comprise an effective/ineffective team? (List on board/Discuss handout.)

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity works best in a roomy classroom. Good segue into Team Communication Skills.

References: Unknown

TEAM COMMUNICATION SKILLS

✓ Listen

- Show your interest
- Ask questions to clarify
- Repeat what you have understood

✓ Speak

- Speak clearly without mumbling
- Organize your thoughts first

✓ Participate

- All opinions are important, so express yours!
- Encourage others to participate

✓ Keep Team Goals in Mind

- Stay on track
- Put personal goals aside, when necessary

PATHWAYS OF TEAM COMMUNICATION

Learning Goals:

- To understand the importance of every member's contribution to the team
- To build awareness of group dynamics

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Have students discuss a team project or a topic relevant to this particular class. While they are having the discussion, diagram their discussion on a piece of flipchart paper. Each person should be represented by a dot and arrows will indicate comments coming to or going from each person. The result is a *sociogram* and will represent the number and direction of the comments made. When the discussion is finished, post the diagram of their conversation and address the following questions:

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What do you see from the diagram of your discussion?
2. Was there a leader or facilitator?
3. Who spoke the most? Was this person the leader or facilitator?
4. Did everyone contribute equally?
5. Was everyone involved in the discussion?

*** Variations** Have a student track the pathways of communication as stated above and share the information with the class.

Remarks: This exercise works effectively with groups so that they can see represented their pathways of conversation. The perception of who spoke the most is often different than the reality. It is an interesting activity to use to build awareness with groups if one person often dominates the conversation or group discussion. A follow-up to this activity would involve discussion of team communication skills.

References:

Clark, Neil. *Team Building, A Practical Guide for Trainers: The McGraw-Hill Training Series*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1994.

RESPECT

Learning Goals:	• To raise students' awareness of respect and its importance in communication
Level:	●
Group Size:	Any
Time:	20 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	None

Learning Activity:

Have the students write down on a piece of paper the following people they respect: an athlete they respect, a family member they respect, and a co-worker they respect. Have the students write down the characteristics they respect in each of these people. List the various characteristics that the students came up with for each category on the board.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Which of the three people was easiest to think of? Why?
2. Are there differences in the characteristics which define our respect for the people in the three categories?
3. Why are we discussing respect in a communication course?
4. Is respect given automatically or is it earned?

*** Variations**	None
Remarks:	This exercise can lead to a discussion on respecting different cultures in the workplace.
References:	None

GROUP MEETING SIMULATION

Learning Goals:

- To understand what makes a workplace meeting productive or unproductive
- To determine what each student can do to contribute to the success of a meeting

Level: ◆

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 1 hour

Preparation and Materials:
Handout *Meeting Evaluation*
Handout *Individual Participation in Group Meetings*

Learning Activity:

Have students write about a workplace meeting that didn't go well. Discuss and list on the board the causes of "bad" meetings. Come up with a list of characteristics of both "good" meetings and "bad" meetings. After completing discussion question #1, have the group choose a topic for a workplace meeting (e.g. a problem to solve/a new policy/a company function.) Appoint a meeting leader/facilitator. Have the class simulate the meeting. Take notes on whether each class member is using the following skills:

- Asking questions for clarification
- Encouraging others to participate
- Supporting others' good ideas

The meeting ends when the participants have decided on the agenda's action items. Have students evaluate the meeting using the *Meeting Evaluation* handout.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What can **you** do to contribute to a successful group meeting? (List on board.) Distribute *Individual Participation in Group Meetings* handout.

2. Did you participate differently in this meeting simulation than the way you usually participate in group meetings? If yes, why?

3. What is one skill that you will use in your next group meeting?

*** Variations**	None
Remarks:	None
References:	None

MEETING EVALUATION

Meeting: ______________________________
Date: ______________________________
Time: ____________ to ____________

Circle one number for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I understood the purpose of this meeting and the meeting's goals.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I understood what was expected of me as a participant and what was expected of the other participants (including the leader or facilitator.)	1	2	3	4	5
3. Most participants listened carefully to each other.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Most participants expressed themselves openly, honestly, and directly.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Participants were open to new ideas and other opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The meeting went as planned (i.e. the agenda was followed, it ended on time) and achieved its meeting goals.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My participation contributed to the results achieved.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Overall, I am satisfied with this meeting and I feel my time here has been well spent.	1	2	3	4	5

Adapted from Meeting Evaluation Scale, by Frank Burns and Robert L. Gragg

Individual Participation in Group Meetings

1. Preparation

- What is the subject/purpose of the meeting?
- What questions do I have?
- What ideas/information can I contribute?
- Should I prepare a "visual" (memo, graph, etc.) for the group participants?

2. Listen to Participants

- Listen to everything each person has to say
- Watch the person speaking/maintain eye contact
- Look interested in what the speaker has to say

3. Strive for Understanding

- Ask questions if something needs clarification/amplification
- Rephrase items/ideas that are not clear
- Paraphrase thoughts to make sure that what you understand is what you heard

4. Encourage People to Participate

- Ask for others' opinions
- Support people's good ideas
- Ask people what they thought of your idea, opinion, etc.
- Ask questions of the entire group

5. Evaluate the Success of the Meeting

- Was anything agreed upon?
- Did the group come to a decision?
- Are there action items that need follow-through?
- Did everyone get a chance to express his/her opinions and ideas?
- Did you get your ideas across clearly and effectively?

GIVE ME A HAND

Learning Goals:	- To help students understand they can achieve more by working together rather than by competing with each other
Level:	●
Group Size:	2 or more students
Time:	5 - 10 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	None

Learning Activity:

Ask students to stand and form "teams" of two. Tell the pairs to face each other and hold their partner's right hand with their own right hand like a handshake. Tell them this is a game to see who can score the most points. Points may be scored each time they touch their right hip with their right hand (while still holding onto their partner's hand). Give them 60 seconds to score as many points as they can. At the end of the 60 seconds, ask how many teams didn't score any points. Then ask how many teams scored between 5 and 10 points. Finally, ask which teams scored more than 10 points and what their scores were. Ask the high scorers to demonstrate how they received so many points. They could demonstrate by repeating the exercise.

***Discussion Questions**

1. Why didn't some teams score any points?
2. How did you communicate with your teammate? What worked? What didn't?
3. How did working as a team help you in the exercise? How can it help you in your job?

***Variations**

Have the students place their palms together in front of them. To score points they must touch each other's shoulder. Another variation, which creates even more competition, is to offer inexpensive prizes to those teams who receive more than a certain number of points.

Remarks:

This activity is a nice way to introduce the concept of team communication. The team communication concepts that can be taught along with this activity can include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Share and encourage ideas.
2. Actively listen; be patient.
3. Speak clearly and be specific.
4. Acknowledge team members' feelings.
5. Be honest--tactfully.
6. Be supportive; recognize others.

References: None

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

Learning Goals:	• To review and discuss disruptive team behaviors and strategies for dealing with these behaviors
Level:	●
Group Size:	2 or more students
Time:	20 - 30 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	Flipcharts for each group

Learning Activity:

Divide class into small groups. Ask each group to think of some disruptive team behaviors they have seen or experienced. Ask the groups to focus on communication behaviors that can inhibit team performance and productivity. After each group has brainstormed and written on the flipchart the behaviors they find disruptive, ask them to select the top three most disruptive behaviors and discuss how they would deal with those behaviors.

***Discussion Questions**

1. What are the most disruptive team behaviors?
2. What are some ways to deal with these behaviors?
3. How can you communicate effectively to avoid these behaviors?

***Variations** None

Remarks: This exercise deals with problems and issues that students find most common within their own teams and organizations. As such, it is an excellent exercise to aid the students in applying the team communication skills to actual work situations.

References: None

THE HUMAN SPIDER WEB

Learning Goals:	• To warm up a new group • To provide an opportunity for participants to work as a team and explore the dimensions of teamwork
Level:	●
Group Size:	6 - 8 students
Time:	30 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	None

Learning Activity:

Divide the group into teams of 6-8 individuals. Have each group move to a location that allows them to stand in a small circle. Instruct members of each group to extend their left hands across the circle and grasp the left hands of the other members who are approximately opposite them. Then, have them extend their right hands across the circle and grasp the right hands of other individuals. Inform them that their task is to unravel the spider web of interlocking arms without letting go of anyone's hands. Time their performance or have them compete with other groups to see who finishes first.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What was your first thought when you heard the nature of the task?
2. What member behaviors detracted (or could detract) from the group's success in achieving its goal?
3. What lessons does this exercise have for future team-building?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: The seemingly impossible is possible when everyone works together.

References:

Hennig, Susan, *Still More Games Trainers Play*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991.

THE 5 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES

Learning Goals:
- To identify the five strategies/styles for dealing with conflict

Level: ◆

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 1 hour

Preparation and Materials: Handouts *Accommodating, Competing, Avoiding, Compromising*, and *Collaborating*

Learning Activity:

Write on the board the five conflict management styles. With the assistance of the class, come up with an explanation of what each strategy is. Ask the students to decide which of the styles they use **most** often. Use masking tape to map out the five areas on the floor. (*Competing* top left, *Collaborating* top right, *Avoiding* bottom left, *Accommodating* bottom right, *Compromising* center.) Ask the students to stand in the area that they consider their predominant conflict management style. Have each group define their style and give an example of when they've used this strategy/style. Have the groups come up with either a nickname or a motto (or song title) which best represents each style/strategy. Have the class take their seats.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. In which type of situation would it be best to compete? accommodate? collaborate? avoid? compromise?
2. What are the advantages/disadvantages of each style?
3. Would you consider each style win/win, win/lose, lose/win or lose/lose and why?

*** Variations** After the activity, have the students write about how they can use this information to better manage conflicts at work. If you have the Thomas-Kilmann Mode Indicator, administer it to the group first and then follow with discussion.

Remarks: None

References:

Thomas, Kenneth W. and Kilmann, Ralph H., *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument*. Xicom, Inc., 1974.

Conflict Management/Negotiation

Whenever you bring two or more people together there is a potential for conflict. In the realm of communication, we need to acknowledge that conflict may arise and to provide students with skills to manage it in an effective manner. Conflict is challenge. It provides opportunities for growth and change. Often to achieve resolution of conflict, negotiation skills are required.

Providing students with an awareness of the various styles of dealing with conflict is the first step in teaching conflict management. Often this awareness can reduce the stress that conflict creates. With an appreciation of the different conflict management styles, students have more control over how they choose to resolve a situation. They can assess which style would be most appropriate and effective with a given person. Each style has its advantages and disadvantages. It is important to encourage students to practice using a variety of styles depending on the type of conflict they may be facing. Role-play activities provide students with an opportunity to experiment with different conflict management styles.

After students have an appreciation and understanding of the different styles, they may integrate the win/win strategy of collaboration in the more complex setting of negotiation. Students feel empowered when they identify areas in their lives where they can negotiate and improve a situation.

ACCOMMODATING

CHARACTERISTICS

- ★ Nonassertive and exclusively cooperative behavior
- ★ Giving up own concerns to satisfy another
- ★ Succumbing to pressures

USEFUL WHEN

- ★ You have discovered you are wrong
- ★ The issue is not important to you
- ★ Harmony is more important than the issue
- ★ It protects you from harm

HARMFUL WHEN

- ★ Your own needs are continually unmet
- ★ Resentment builds up

COMPETING

CHARACTERISTICS

- ★ Aggressive and uncooperative behavior
- ★ Pursuing one's own concerns at the expense of another
- ★ Win-lose
- ★ Conflict seen as a battle ground

USEFUL WHEN

- ★ Quick, decisive action is required (emergency)
- ★ Best performance is rewarded (sports)
- ★ Relationship is secondary to the goal

HARMFUL WHEN

- ★ Relationships are damaged
- ★ Other party goes "underground"
- ★ Options become limited

AVOIDING

CHARACTERISTICS

- ★ Passive, sometimes passive-aggressive, behavior
- ★ Refusing to engage openly in the conflict
- ★ Sidestepping the issue or withdrawing

USEFUL WHEN

- ★ Time is needed to consider one's response
- ★ The issue is relatively unimportant
- ★ The relationship is doomed anyway
- ★ Others can manage the conflict without you
- ★ Engaging in the conflict could be harmful

HARMFUL WHEN

- ★ The conflict continues to simmer under the surface
- ★ An explosion or backlash develops later
- ★ Options for resolving the conflict are blocked

COMPROMISING

CHARACTERISTICS

- ★ Equalizes the power balance
- ★ Appears reasonable

USEFUL WHEN

- ★ Time and energy are limited
- ★ Temporary or expedient settlements are acceptable
- ★ Other conflict resolution styles fail

HARMFUL WHEN

- ★ The real issues are avoided
- ★ Creative new options get blocked
- ★ Both parties feel they have lost

COLLABORATING

CHARACTERISTICS

- ★ Assertive and cooperative behavior
- ★ Parties work together to find solutions that maximize goals for all
- ★ "We" perspective, not "you and I"

USEFUL WHEN

- ★ Seeking a solution that meets everyone's needs
- ★ Generating new ideas
- ★ Gaining commitment to the solution
- ★ Affirming commitment to the relationship
- ★ Building a team approach

HARMFUL WHEN

- ★ Time and energy are limited
- ★ Investment in the relationship or issues is low

WHAT'S NEGOTIABLE?

Learning Goals:
- To identify what portions of a person's job are negotiable

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Have students write down the aspects of their jobs which they consider negotiable and those which they consider non-negotiable (e.g. hours may be negotiable, safety rules may not be negotiable). As a class, create a list of the areas/items at the company which are usually considered negotiable.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. With whom would you be able to negotiate these items?
2. Which of these items is the most important to you?
3. Why is it helpful to clarify which items are negotiable and which are not?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity helps students understand what areas of their job they have control over and is a good pre- or post-activity to learning negotiation tactics.

References: None

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CONFLICT

Learning Goals:

- To recognize assumptions about conflict
- To question those assumptions and clarify what conflict is

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask the learners to write down the first five things that come to mind regarding conflict. Ask for volunteers to share items from their lists.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What is conflict?
2. Does conflict have to be negative?
3. When can conflict be positive?
4. What determines whether conflict is positive or negative?
5. What exactly makes an interaction a conflict?

*** Variations**

You could have the class give their reactions to conflict and record them on a board or flipchart.

Remarks:

According to Hocker and Wilmont, there are three primary assumptions regarding conflict. They are: conflict is neither good nor bad, it depends on how its managed; conflict is a natural and necessary part of all social systems; sometimes conflict should be escalated.

Hocker and Wilmont's formal definition of conflict is: "an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources and interference from the other party in achieving the goals or getting the resources."

References:

Hocker, Joyce L. and Wilmont, William W.. *Interpersonal Conflict*. 3rd ed. Dubuque, Iowa: WM. C. Brown Publishers, 1991.

OTHER'S POINT OF VIEW

Learning Goals:	• To discover how difficult it is to express the opinions, ideas, and views of the other party during a conflict • To practice expressing and examining the other person's point of view in a conflict
Level:	■
Group Size:	Any
Time:	20 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	Flipchart directions

Learning Activity:

Ask each student to find a partner and explain the following directions to them:

1. Think of a conflict (now or in the past).
2. Explain the basics of the conflict to your partner from your point of view.
3. Explain why you feel the way you do.
4. What is your position?
5. What are the advantages (to you) of holding your position?
6. What do you like and dislike about your position?
7. What do you really want?
8. NOW . . . go through steps 2-7 but take the other person's position/point of view.
9. Now switch roles and let your partner go through steps 1-8!

***Discussion Questions**

1. What happened?
2. Was it easy or difficult for you to explain the other person's point of view? Why?
3. How will you use the information you learned to help resolve conflict?

***Variations** None

Remarks: None

References: Unknown

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VERBAL AGGRESSIVENESS

Learning Goals:

- To identify ways of responding to verbal aggressiveness
- To practice those methods for responding to verbal aggressiveness

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 1 hour

Preparation and Materials: Handout *6 Healthy Habits from Dominic Infante's Arguing Constructively*

Learning Activity:

Pass out Handout.

Explain: Verbal aggression describes an attack on the person rather than the person's ideas or behavior, usually an intentional attempt to attack the other person's self concept. Verbal aggression includes, but is not limited to, verbal and nonverbal behavior which makes either or both people feel physically threatened.

Verbal aggression includes: insults, background attacks, profanity, ridicule, competency attacks and the use of a condescending tone of voice.

Ask: If anyone in the class has experienced verbal aggression. Take a few examples.

Explain: The effects of verbal aggression include: damage to the relationship, damage to either or both person's self concept, physical force.

Explain: Ways to deal with verbal aggression include: pointing out what the other person is doing and explaining how it makes you feel, treating what the other person is saying as a claim, asking for evidence, not responding with verbal aggression, leaving.

Explain: According to CareerTrack, guidelines for confronting someone about his or her behavior include: letting him or her know that your intent is positive, being very specific about the behavior trait that is a problem, pointing out the adverse results of his or her behavior and being very specific about positive behavior.

Ask: Everyone to pair up with another person in the room and role-play. Give them fifteen minutes to find a partner and to complete the exercise. One person is to be verbally aggressive and the other person is to practice several ways of responding to the verbal aggression constructively. They should then switch roles. Tell the students they need to make sure that both partners have time to play both roles.

Explain: That they may initially feel awkward with the role they are playing, but it will give each person practice so the next time they are faced with a verbally aggressive person, they will be quicker to respond in a constructive way.

After twenty minutes, reassemble the class. Ask for volunteers to share what they learned from the exercise.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. When you were first attacked, how did you feel?
2. Did it take some time for you to get used to responding with the tips on the handout?
3. How did the verbally aggressive person respond to you?
4. How did it feel to be the attacker?

*** Variations** Eliminate all the explanations to save time.

Remarks: If you're short on students or short on time, you could role-play with a student and ask the rest of the class to identify the strategies (responses) you each used to combat verbal aggressiveness.

References:

Infante, Dominic A. *Arguing Constructively*. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1988.

6 HEALTHY HABITS FROM DOMINIC INFANTE'S ARGUING CONSTRUCTIVELY

1. Focus on ideas, not people. Focus simultaneously on getting your point across and on affirming the other person's self concept.

2. Don't overwhelm them. Use the least amount of skill necessary to make your point.

3. Show that you are interested in what others have to say.

    a. Listen carefully and look interested. Do you know how you look when you listen? You could be sending the wrong message. Monitor your nonverbal communication.

    b. Tell them you are interested in what they have to say.

    c. Paraphrase and clarify what they say.

    d. Let the person finish speaking. Do not interrupt. When you interrupt another person, you are really saying, "What you have to say is not important, but what I have to say is."

4. Use a calm, non-sarcastic, friendly delivery style.

5. Don't yell and scream. Don't use a condescending tone of voice. Don't use sarcasm. Don't laugh, because that indicates that you are attacking the person (verbal aggressiveness).

6. Emphasize what you have in common.

Customer Service

Customer service skills encompass a broad array of communication skills -- everything from voice quality to active listening to negotiation. Effective customer service is also strongly based in problem solving skills. This section is meant to provide a wide range of communication and problem solving activities for all employees as every employee is involved with "customer service."

The initial part of the instructor's task in teaching customer service skills is to help students see who their customers are. The realization that customers exist both externally and internally enables students to connect with the content even if they are not on the front-line of customer service. It is important to view each activity and its application of skill in terms of both internal and external customers. The second part of teaching effective customer service skills is to have students to put themselves in the customer's shoes. The introductory activities in this section are provided to accomplish both of these purposes.

The majority of the remaining activities in this section focus on the practice of particular skills. Role-plays for dealing with difficult customers, peer observation of voice quality, group brainstorming for solutions to internal and external problems are examples of the types of activities included in this section.

Many of the communication activities from the entire cookbook may be introduced into a Customer Service training piece just as many of the customer service activities may be adapted for a more general communication class. In the workplace, quality customer service is achieved when an employee views each person they provide with information, product, or a service as a "customer" and views each situation, problem, or challenge as an opportunity to improve his/her relationship with that person.

THE IDEAL CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

Learning Goals:

- To identify qualities and characteristics of the ideal customer service representative
- To be able to put themselves in the customer's "shoes."

Level: ●

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Characteristics of the Ideal CSR*
Handout *Characteristics of the Ideal CSR - Self Assessment*

Learning Activity:

Have each student think or write about a negative experience he/she has had with a Customer Service Representative (CSR) or salesperson when the student was the customer. Have each student share his/her story with the class. List the negative qualities of the bad CSR on a flip chart. Turn the negatives into positives [e.g. "rude" becomes "polite"] to generate a class list of "Characteristics of the Ideal Customer Service Representative." Pass out Handout 1. Have the students assess their skills with Handout 2.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. How would you like to be treated as the customer?
2. What characteristics are most important in a CSR position?

*** Variations** This activity can also be used as a means for students to introduce themselves to the class.

Remarks: This activity works well with groups of five or more. The quantity of stories really helps to generate positive and negative characteristics. Occasionally someone will say they can't think of a negative experience. Ask them to think of a positive experience.

References: None

Characteristics of the Ideal Customer Service Representative

The Ideal Customer Service Representative is:

- Friendly
- Courteous
- Professional
- Knowledgeable
- Understanding
- Concerned
- Accountable -- "Takes Ownership"
- Respectful
- Pleasant
- Helpful
- A Good Listener
- Sincere
- An Effective Communicator
- Patient
- Organized
- Efficient
- Resourceful

Characteristics of the Ideal Customer Service Representative-Self Assessment

Please rate yourself as a CSR in the following areas. A rating of "5" indicates that you display this characteristic consistently. A rating of "1" indicates that you seldom display this characteristic.

Characteristics	Self-Assessment
• Friendly	1 2 3 4 5
• Courteous	1 2 3 4 5
• Professional	1 2 3 4 5
• Knowledgeable	1 2 3 4 5
• Understanding	1 2 3 4 5
• Concerned	1 2 3 4 5
• Accountable -- "Takes Ownership"	1 2 3 4 5
• Respectful	1 2 3 4 5
• Pleasant	1 2 3 4 5
• Helpful	1 2 3 4 5
• A Good Listener	1 2 3 4 5
• Sincere	1 2 3 4 5
• An Effective Communicator	1 2 3 4 5
• Patient	1 2 3 4 5
• Organized	1 2 3 4 5
• Efficient	1 2 3 4 5
• Resourceful	1 2 3 4 5

VOICE QUALITY

Learning Goals: • To recognize and practice voice skills: inflection, speed, tone, volume, pitch

Level: ■

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Have a volunteer say the following:

"Hello...[Name of company]. This is [name]. How may I help you?"

Have them:

- say it while frowning
- say it while smiling
- say it very fast
- say it very slowly
- say it in a monotone
- say it like it's a secret
- say it like they are frustrated
- say it casually
- say it in a professional voice

*** Discussion Questions**

1. How did each different delivery affect you?
2. How would it affect the customer?
3. How do you usually answer the phone?
4. How do inflection and tone change the meaning of the greeting?

*** Variations** Pass out index cards with instructions on how to say the phrase and have the other students guess what was indicated.

Remarks:

An interesting discussion that resulted from this exercise concerned speed. The more experienced customer service representatives felt that speed conveyed efficiency and concern to customers. Other students felt that if someone spoke too quickly, a customer might feel like his/her call wasn't important and the representative was rushing through it. It's good to keep this activity focused on what the customer wants to hear.

References:

Scott, Dru, Ph.D. *Customer Satisfaction, The Other Half of Your Job*. CA: Crisp Publications Inc., 1991.

McCormick, John. *Training Materials from Alameda Newspaper Group*, CA.

ROLE-PLAY CUSTOMER SITUATIONS

Learning Goals:
- To practice professional phone skills
- To give feedback on a person's phone skills

Level: ■

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Observation Checklist*

Learning Activity:

Have students role-play a typical customer call. Work in groups of three. One person plays the customer; one person the Customer Service Representative (CSR); one the observer. The CSR will practice using professional phone skills (i.e. speed, volume, articulation, tone). The observer will make notes on the observation form. The observer will share the observations. Switch roles until everyone has had an opportunity to be the CSR. Ask the students to share role-play scenarios with the class.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Did you agree with the observations?
2. What voice quality do you need to work on most?

*** Variations:** If the class is large or time is limited, have students role-play in front of the class. The class can complete the observation form. Give students additional observation forms to use during their training.

Remarks: It is most useful to have some experienced CSRs in the class as they will be readily able to come up with typical customer call situations. If the group is inexperienced, provide them with scenarios that are realistic for the company.

References:

McCormick, John. *Training Materials for Alameda Newspaper Group*. CA.

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Professional Phone Skills

Observe the person practicing as the Customer Service Representative for the following skills:

SPEED: **Too Slow** __________

Too Fast __________

Just Right __________

VOLUME: **Too Soft** __________

Too Loud __________

Just Right __________

ARTICULATION:

Clear __________

Mumbled __________

TONE: **Friendly** __________

Courteous __________

Fake/Phony __________

Confident __________

Hurried __________

OTHER OBSERVATIONS:

DON'T SAY IT

Learning Goals:	• To learn to rephrase statements to give customers a positive impression • To learn which statements to avoid using with customers
Level:	●
Group Size:	2 or more students
Time:	20 - 30 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	Handout *Statements to Avoid Using With The Customer* Handout *Exercise - Professional Phone Skills*

Learning Activity:

Have the students work in groups to brainstorm statements which Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) should not use with the customer. The groups should share their lists with class and explain "why" the statement should be avoided in each case. Distribute the handout and discuss any points which haven't been covered in the student discussion. Have the students work on the rephrasing exercise handout in their groups. Ask the students to share their responses with the class.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What can you say instead of "I'll try"?
2. How much information should be shared with the customer? Where do you draw the line?
3. Why is it bad to lay blame on other employees or other departments?
4. How can you turn negative responses ("I don't..." "I can't..." "No...") into positive phrases?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity builds awareness of the types of statements that annoy customers. Focus discussion not only on how statements were rephrased but also on why they were rephrased.

References:

Scott, Dru. *Customer Satisfaction, The Other Half of Your Job*, CA: Crisp Publications Inc., 1991.

Zemke, Ron, and Anderson, Kristin. *Delivering Knock Your Socks Off Service*, Amacom, New York: American Management Association, 1991.

McCormick, John. *Training Materials from Alameda Newspaper Group*, CA.

STATEMENTS TO AVOID USING WITH THE CUSTOMER

Statement	**Reason to Avoid Using**
"You have to..."	***This will certainly irritate a customer who is probably thinking that he or she shouldn't have to do anything.***
"I'll try..."	***Customers may feel annoyed when they hear this phrase. It is too vague. Instead use "I will [do something]."***
"But..."	***This one word takes the power away from everything that has come before it. A better transitioning word is "however"...***
"It's not our policy."	***To the customer, this phrase indicates that you are not going to help him or her. It is an immediate turn off. Try to explain the company policy or procedure without using this phrase.***
"You should have..."	***This is sure to upset a customer, who may come back with "No, you should have..." Avoid telling the customer what to do – try asking, requesting, explaining in another way.***

EXERCISE -- PROFESSIONAL PHONE SKILLS

Rephrase the comments below:

1. I'm not sure where she is. May I take your number and have her call you?

2. I don't understand why the other customer service representative couldn't help you.

3. I'm sorry that took so long. Now, what is it you want?

4. I hope this will solve your problem.

5. The billing department has had a lot of problems lately. I'll call over there and see what can be done to sort this out.

6. I'll try to get an answer for you from the supervisor.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

Learning Goals:

- To learn how to re-direct the anger of an irate customer
- To brainstorm strategies to use with difficult customers

Level: ●

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Dealing with Difficult Customers, The Five Steps*
Handout *Remember...*

Learning Activity:

Have the students write about their best/worst experience with an irate customer. Ask for volunteers to share anecdotes with the class. In groups, have students brainstorm as many tactics and strategies as they can think of to calm customers down. Create a master list from the group's lists. Pass out handouts.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What does the irate customer want?
2. What language (specific phrases) can you use to calm the customer down?
3. What should customer service representatives avoid doing?
4. How will you handle your next irate customer?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: Try to keep students focused on the topic. Make sure they share anecdotes from their current workplace if possible.

References:

Scott, Dru. *Customer Satisfaction. The Other Half of Your Job*. CA: Crisp Publications Inc., 1991.

McCormick, John. *Training Materials from Alameda Newspaper Group*. CA.

Zemke, Ron, and Anderson, Kristin. *Delivering Knock Your Socks Off Service*. New York: Amacom, American Management Association, 1991.

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US Department of Education

REMEMBER . . .

- ● *Take Anger Professionally Not Personally*
- ■ *Tell The Customer What You Can Do, NOT What You Can't*
- ▲ *The Customer Isn't Always Right, But The Customer Is Always The Customer.*

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

THE FIVE STEPS

1. LISTEN

   - **Allow the customer to vent**
   - **Identify the problem**
   - **Get all the information**

2. EXPRESS UNDERSTANDING

   - **Use calming language**
     "I understand how you feel."
     "I apologize."

3. SUMMARIZE

   - **Repeat and rephrase**
     "What I heard was..."
     "Let me make sure I have all the information..."

   - **Ask questions for clarification**

4. SOLVE THE PROBLEM

   - **Collaborate with the customer**

   - **Use language to express that you will solve the problem**
     "I'll take action on this by..."
     "Here's what we can do..."
     "What I suggest/recommend..."

5. SPECIFY FOLLOW-UP ACTION

   - **"I'll do this and call you back..."**
   - **"We've agreed to do this..."**

TWO QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

1. WHAT (IF ANYTHING) COULD HAVE PREVENTED THIS PROBLEM?

2. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO AVOID THIS SITUATION WITH ANOTHER CUSTOMER?

ROLE-PLAY: DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

Learning Goals:

- To simulate an irate customer experience
- To practice strategies to use with difficult customers

Level: ■

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Dealing with Difficult Customers, The Five Steps*

Learning Activity:

Have the students divide into pairs. Have each student think of a typical irate customer situation. Instruct one partner to play the irate customer role and the other partner to play the customer service representative (CSR). The CSR will use the strategy outlined in the handout to deal with the customer. The students should switch roles. Ask volunteers to do their role-play in front of the class.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What did you want to hear as the irate customer?
2. Were you able to use The Five Steps to deal effectively with the customer? If not, why not?
3. Will you feel more in control of your next difficult customer call? Why?

*** Variations** Have students work in groups of three. The third member would be the observer.

Remarks: Role-playing the part of the irate customer is beneficial for students. It helps them understand the customer's point of view.

References:

Scott, Dru. *Customer Satisfaction, The Other Half of Your Job*. CA: Crisp Publications Inc., 1991.

McCormick, John. *Training Materials from Alameda Newspaper Group*. CA.

Zemke, Ron, and Anderson, Kristin. *Delivering Knock Your Socks Off Service*. New York: Amacom, American Management Association, 1991.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

THE FIVE STEPS

1. LISTEN

- Allow the customer to vent
- Identify the problem
- Get all the information

2. EXPRESS UNDERSTANDING

- Use calming language
  "I understand how you feel."
  "I apologize."

3. SUMMARIZE

- Repeat and rephrase
  "What I heard was..."
  "Let me make sure I have all the information..."

- Ask questions for clarification

4. SOLVE THE PROBLEM

- Collaborate with the customer

- Use language to express that you will solve the problem
  "I'll take action on this by..."
  "Here's what we can do..."
  "What I suggest/recommend..."

5. SPECIFY FOLLOW-UP ACTION

- "I'll do this and call you back..."
- "We've agreed to do this..."

TWO QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

1. WHAT (IF ANYTHING) COULD HAVE PREVENTED THIS PROBLEM?

2. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO AVOID THIS SITUATION WITH ANOTHER CUSTOMER?

RED RULES/BLUE RULES

Learning Goals:
- To determine what is negotiable
- To identify company rules and understand how they apply to customer service situations

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Red and Blue Markers

Learning Activity:

Explain the concept of red and blue company rules. Red rules are "set in stone"; they are dictated by safety issues, management decisions, government regulations, legal considerations. (Example: No one can enter the plant without safety glasses.) Blue rules evolve from habit, procedure and policy, and experience. (Example: The sequence in which a customer's purchase order is filled out.) Blue rules may be bent to serve a customer's wishes whereas red rules override a customer's wishes. Have the class split into two groups -- the red group and the blue group. Give them flip chart paper and appropriate markers. One group will brainstorm the company's red rules; the other will brainstorm the blue rules. When the students are finished, post both lists for everyone to see.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Do some rules appear on both lists? Are they really red or blue?
2. Does each team have rules to add to the other team's list?
3. Does everyone agree on the red and blue rules that have been defined?
4. Is it clear which issues can be negotiated with external customers? Circle these.
5. Which items can be negotiated with internal customers? Circle these.

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity works well with a mixed group of newer employees and veteran employees. A supervisor can also contribute by clarifying the red and blue rules. It generates lively discussion.

References:

Zemke, Ron, and Anderson, Kristin. *Delivering Knock Your Socks Off Service*. New York: Amacom, American Management Association, 1991.

THE THREE C'S

Learning Goals:
- To compare the negotiating and problem solving process
- To brainstorm options (solutions) for particular customer situations

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials:
Handout *Negotiating and Problem Solving Process*
Overhead *The Three C's*
A Ball
Index Cards

Learning Activity:

Use the handout to present the negotiation process and compare it to the problem solving process. Discuss the concept of giving the customer options and how it relates to brainstorming. Move onto three types of options offered in the customer service world -- **C**oup, **C**ompromise and **C**oncession (the three **C**'s). Put up overhead. Have students work in groups to think of several customer service problem situations where negotiation would be required; have them write these situations on index cards. Have the groups stand in a circle. Have the first group toss the ball and pose a problem; the team who catches the ball has to come up with three options for each problem (ideally, the three C's). Have the groups continue throwing the ball until everyone has had a chance to pose a problem and brainstorm options for the customer.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Which **C** would you give an irate customer first? Why?
2. Which **C** would you use with an established customer? Why?
3. How do you know which **C** to use?
4. How does having more options help the negotiating process?

*** Variations**	None
Remarks:	This activity works well with CSRs who often give customers the concession option without trying to negotiate any other position. It stretches CSRs to brainstorm as many options as possible for the company *and* the customer and to take control of the customer call.
References:	None

NEGOTIATING AND PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS

Before Sitting Down to the Negotiating Table

- **Identify the issue or conflict**
- **Define your position**
- **Define the other party's position**
- **Determine your "bottom line"**
- **Brainstorm all possible solutions or options**
- **Go to an objective source**
- **Decide on the most acceptable solution(s)**

At the Negotiating Table

Repeat the seven steps outlined above

- **Choose the best solution or option to resolve the issue**

After Negotiation -- Reviewing the Process

- **Did you avoid the "roadblocks"?**
- **What conflict management style did you use? Was it most appropriate to the situation?**
- **Were you satisfied with the outcome?**
- **Has your relationship with the other party been improved?**
- **Would you do anything differently if a similar conflict arose?**

THE 3 C's

COUP

- You get the customer to agree to the best solution for the company.

COMPROMISE

- You and the customer agree on a solution that is acceptable to both parties.

CONCESSION

- You give the customer what he/she wants.

THE OTHER POINT OF VIEW

Learning Goals:
- To understand a conflict situation from the other point of view
- To define your position

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Other's Point of View*

Learning Activity:

Discuss the importance of understanding the other point of view in preparing for negotiation. Have students get into pairs. Ask each student to think of something he/she has negotiated or would like to negotiate with an internal or external customer. Examples: a raise, flex-time, customer wants repair after warranty date, customer wants replacement parts, etc. Have the students use the handout to go through the steps of defining their position. Then, instruct the students to take the other person's position. Each partner should go through the activity. Re-group for discussion.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Did it help to put yourself in the customer's shoes?
2. Was it difficult to take the customer's side?
3. Would this help you negotiate better with your customers?
4. Did you see the situation in a new light?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity is difficult for some students. Help them to articulate the other point of view by asking them to pretend that they are the other person instead of just saying "this person would say this..."

References: Unknown

OTHER'S POINT OF VIEW

1. Think of a conflict (now or in past).
2. Explain the basics to your partner from your point of view.
3. Explain why you feel the way you do.
4. What is your position?
5. Why does that position make sense to you?
6. What are the advantages (to you) to holding your position?
7. What do you like and dislike about your position?
8. What do you really want?

NOW . . .

9. Go through steps 2-8 but, take the other person's (the person you are in conflict with) position.

ONE PARTNER PRACTICES 1-9 AND THE OTHER PARTNER LISTENS AND ASKS CLARIFYING QUESTIONS.

Switch roles.

TURNING NEGATIVES INTO POSITIVES

Learning Goals:

- To learn how to "turn" a negative customer situation into a more positive one
- To practice problem solving

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Copies *Funny Money*

Learning Activity:

Divide the class into two groups. Have the groups brainstorm 10 negative customer situations. Teams will stand and take turns posing negative situations to the other side; teams will be awarded $1000 in funny money for each situation that they can turn into a positive one. After the game, the teams will count their money. Pose an internal negative situation to the students (e.g. stress on the job) and ask each team what they would do with the money to change the situation.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. How realistic is it to turn negatives into positives?
2. How would it make you feel to be able to do this?
3. For the internal negative situation, could you do some of the things in your proposals without money? What? How?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity provides an active way of looking at negatives and positives. It works best with large groups.

References: None

$1000

Funny ☺ Money

$1000

Funny ☺ Money

$1000

Funny ☺ Money

Presentation Skills

In the workplace, more employees are being asked to give formal and informal presentations. In our personal lives, we're called upon to do public speaking at significant gatherings of family and friends (i.e. weddings and funerals). The ability to speak in front of a group with confidence is valued and respected in our society, yet a majority of Americans express more fear of public speaking than of their own death.

Public speaking is, in essence, the practice of expressing yourself to a group of more than one person. It requires research (of topic and of audience), organizational skills, writing, the use of visual aids, and effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills. A class which is centered on presentation skills would best be suited to a student who has taken some introductory communication skills classes.

Introductory activities examine students' feelings about public speaking and convey the attitude that those feelings (typically, fear and nervousness) are widely held in our society. Once fears and concerns have been addressed, the best way to learn presentation skills is through practice. An instructor should strive to create a classroom environment where students feel comfortable. If a supportive environment for peer evaluation has been established, peer learning can occur. In order to achieve this goal, it is important to include some training in giving and receiving feedback to all participants. Activities in the Feedback section may be used to provide this training. Students should be given opportunities to practice all of their new skills in short presentations and in a longer, more formal presentation.

The way something is said is often as important as the message itself. The ability to speak eloquently and with confidence increases the impact of the message being delivered.

THE #1 FEAR

Learning Goals:	• To address feelings about public speaking
Level:	●
Group Size:	4 or more students
Time:	20 minutes
Preparation and Materials:	Handout *The Ten Worst Human Fears* Paper Plates Masking Tape Colored Markers

Learning Activity:

Give each of the students a paper plate and a number of colored markers. Ask the students to draw a face that represents how they feel about public speaking. When everyone has drawn a face, tape them to the wall and create a "gallery." Ask students to volunteer to identify their faces. Discuss the fact that public speaking is the #1 fear in the U.S. (followed in order by: heights, insects and bugs, financial problems, deep water, sickness, death, flying, loneliness and dogs).

*** Discussion Questions**

1. How do you feel about public speaking? Why?
2. Do you have to do any public speaking?
3. What was your best/worst public speaking experience?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This is a right-brained activity used to introduce the topic of presentation skills. Leave the faces up in the "gallery" until the end of the course and as a wrap-up, ask students how they feel about public speaking at that time.

References:

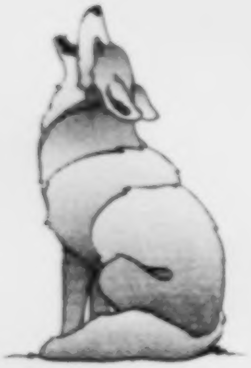
Axtell, Roger E. *Do's and Taboos of Public Speaking*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1992.

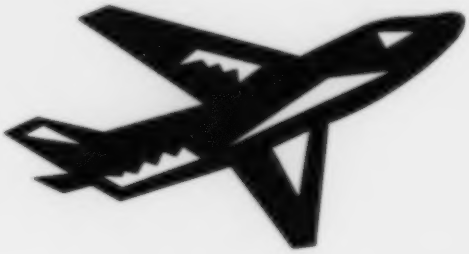
Hoff, Ron. *"I Can See You Naked."* Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1992.

McCarthy, Bernice. *The 4MAT System: Teaching to Learning Styles with Right/Left Mode Techniques.* EXCEL, Inc., 1987.

The Ten Worst Human Fears (in the US)

1. Speaking before a group
2. Heights
3. Insects and bugs
4. Financial problems
5. Deep water
6. Sickness
7. Death
8. Flying
9. Loneliness
10. Dogs





THE LINE UP

Learning Goals:
- To self-assess presentation skills
- To introduce yourself to the class
- To address feelings about public speaking

Level: ●

Group Size: 6 or more students

Time: 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Masking Tape (optional)

Learning Activity:

Ask the students to assemble along a line, which you have created with masking tape or which is an imaginary line. They should form their line beginning with the employee who has been at the company the longest and end it with the newest employee. Have students introduce themselves and share information on why they want to take the class. After they have shared this information, ask them to move around the continuum based on their reactions to the following questions:

*** Discussion Questions**

1. If one end of the line is "I love public speaking" and the other end is "I hate (I'm afraid of) public speaking", where do you belong?
2. If one end of the line is "I do a lot of public speaking" and the other is "I never (rarely) do public speaking", where do you belong?
3. If one end of the line is "I'm great at speaking in front of groups" and the other is "I'm terrible at speaking in front of groups", where do you belong?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: Good ice-breaker and introductory activity.

References: None

QUALITY QUOTATIONS

Learning Goals: • To recognize different voice qualities: inflection, speed, tone, volume, pitch

Level: ●

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Jar of Quotations or Quotations on Index Cards

Learning Activity:

Have the students select a quotation from the jar. Go around the room in order and give each student a different direction for saying his/her quotation. Sample directions include:

- while frowning
- while smiling
- very quickly
- very slowly
- in a monotone
- like it's a secret
- loudly
- softly
- like he/she is frustrated
- like he/she is bored
- casually
- as a question
- as a command
- professionally

*** Discussion Questions**

1. How did each different delivery affect you?
2. How would it affect the audience?
3. How do inflection and tone change the meaning of information?
4. How can you practice voice quality?

*** Variations**	Ask students to write down reactions to each quotation as they are read by students and discuss reactions.
Remarks:	None
References:	None

JOKES AND STORIES

Learning Goals:
- To practice joke and story telling for use in presentations

Level: ●

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Jokes and Stories on Index Cards
Handout *When Preparing to Use a Joke*

Learning Activity:

Have everyone in class choose a joke or story to tell the class. Each person will get up in front of the class and deliver a joke. Review information from handout.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Are you comfortable telling jokes? Does laughing relax you? Is this a strategy you could use to put yourself at ease with an audience?
2. How would the joke affect the audience?
3. When would a joke or humorous anecdote be appropriate to the subject of your presentation? When wouldn't a joke be appropriate?

*** Variations** Have students deliver their jokes and anecdotes in-between other students' presentations. This is a great way to keep everyone involved while presentations are being made and to fill time between presentations.

Remarks: None

References:

Walter, Lilly. *What to Say When You're Dying on the Platform.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

When Preparing to Use a Joke

If you are going to include a joke in your next speech, you might want to consider these suggestions from Lilly Walters, Executive Director of an International Speakers' Bureau:

- **Be sure** to memorize the punch line.
- **Practice** the story and see if you can cut it in half.
- **Use the** story only to make a point that you want people to remember. Be sure the story relates to the point you're trying to make. If it doesn't provoke laughter, the point will still be made.
- **Wait for** the laugh. It takes the audience longer than you to process a joke. You already know the punch line.
- **If no** one laughs, then you might say: "That was a joke designed to get a silent laugh -- and it worked." (Roger Angley)
- **Look at** someone in the audience whom everyone else knows and say: "_____, that's the last time I use your material!" Be sure you clear this with the person ahead of time.

Walter, Lilly. What to Say When You're Dying on the Platform. McGraw-Hill: New York.

LET ME INTRODUCE...

Learning Goals:

- To practice speaking in front of a group
- To learn about other students

Level: ●

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Introduction Worksheet*

Learning Activity:

Have the students choose a partner. Tell them they will be introducing each other to the class. Have them prepare for the introductions by interviewing each other using the questions on the handout. Give students a little time to practice. Then, ask each student to introduce his/her partner to the class. Have the students do the introductions in front of the class.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Were you comfortable in front of the class?
2. Is it easier for your to speak in front of your peers or in front of strangers?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This is a good introductory activity. Students may practice speaking in front of people in a relaxed, safe environment. If you assess that the students are particularly nervous, they may do the introductions from their seats.

References: None

INTRODUCTION WORKSHEET

FULL NAME:

JOB DESCRIPTION/DEPARTMENT:

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES AND INTERESTS?

WHAT WAS YOUR BEST OR WORST SPEAKING EXPERIENCE?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

TIPS

- When you introduce one friend to another, you want them to get interested in each other and to like each other. When you introduce someone to an audience, you want to achieve the same goal. You want the person and the audience to be interested in one another -- to feel warmth and friendliness.
- You should include the person's name several times so everyone can catch it.
- An introduction should give background information to enhance the person's credibility with the audience.
- Your tone of voice and facial expression should convey enthusiasm.
- Be sure to pronounce the person's name correctly!

FEEDBACK SKILLS FOR EVALUATORS

Learning Goals:
- To review concepts of positive and constructive feedback
- To practice giving positive and constructive feedback to presenters

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Tips for Evaluators*

Learning Activity:

Have a discussion about feedback with the class. Define and discuss *constructive, negative* and *positive* feedback. Distribute handout and discuss the tips. Give students examples of situations where they would need to give constructive feedback; ask them to practice giving feedback in these situations. [Examples: Presenter is reading from note cards and doesn't look at audience; presenter speaks too fast; presenter's material is unorganized.]

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Why is it important to give feedback in this class?
2. Are you comfortable receiving feedback in class from your peers?
3. Are you comfortable giving feedback?
4. Should we establish some additional class guidelines for giving feedback?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: Peer teaching and learning are invaluable. Hopefully, a trusting, supportive environment has been established in the class so that constructive feedback will be given tactfully and received openly. If this is not the case, have the class members focus on giving positive feedback and you can guide the constructive feedback portion of the evaluation.

References: None

TIPS FOR EVALUATORS

- ➜ Focus on strengths and areas for improvement by giving positive as well as constructive feedback.

- ➜ Be specific in giving feedback (use examples).

- ➜ Give advice or suggestions when giving constructive feedback.

- ➜ Foster a supportive learning environment.

THE IMPACT OF VISUAL AIDS

Learning Goals:

- To recognize the impact of visual aids
- To distinguish between effective and ineffective visual aids

Level: ■

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Videotape the weather portion of the newscast and/or part of a cooking or gardening show.

Learning Activity:

Have the students watch the videos and focus on how the speaker uses visual aids to help communicate the message. Ask the learners to form small groups and answer the following questions.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What kind or kinds of visual aids are used?
2. How do they enhance the speaker's message?
3. What would the speaker need to do to communicate the message effectively without visual aids?

*** Variations** You could assign this as a homework assignment to be discussed during the following class.

Remarks: None

References:

Lucas, Stephen E. *The Art of Public Speaking*. 3rd ed. New York: Random House, 1989.

PROBLEMS WITH A PURPOSE

Learning Goals:
- To recognize problems with presentation purpose statements
- To practice rewriting purpose statements

Level: ■

Group Size: Between 3 and 10 students

Time: 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Problem Statements*

Learning Activity:

Distribute the *Problem Statement* handout. Have the students identify the problem with each one of these statements and rewrite the statement to correct the problem.

The specific purpose statement should (1) be a full infinitive phrase, not a fragment; (2) be phrased as a statement, not a question; (3) avoid figurative language; (4) concentrate on one distinct idea; (5) not be too vague or general.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Why is it important to have a purpose for your presentation?
2. How does the purpose shape the presentation?

*** Variations** You could go over the statements as a group or assign this for homework.

Remarks: This exercise works best when prefaced by a section on topic selection and when followed by a session on how to construct a thesis statement.

References:

Lucas, Stephen E. *The Art of Public Speaking*. 3rd ed. New York: Random House, 1989.

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

To inform my audience how to make a great submarine sandwich.

To inform my audience about the growth of credit card fraud and the methods of sound financial planning.

To persuade my audience that something has to be done about the problem of America's deteriorating bridges.

To inform my audience about Disneyland.

What is Lyme disease?

To inform my audience why square grooves are superior to U-shaped grooves on golf clubs.

Give blood.

To persuade my audience that being a Big Brother or a Big Sister is an incredible experience.

TO LIE OR NOT TO LIE

Learning Goals:

- To recognize nonverbal indicators of credibility
- To practice identifying those indicators

Level: ■

Group Size: 10 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Write "LIE" or "TRUTH" on three or four index cards. Prepare a list of emotional questions:

1. Do you believe the death penalty is justified? Why or why not?
2. Should prayer be allowed in public schools?
3. Do you believe some books should be censored? Why or why not?
4. Do you believe in living together before marriage? Why or why not?

Learning Activity:

Ask for three or four volunteers to go outside of the room with you. Give each one an index card. The volunteers are not allowed to speak to one another or to show each other their cards. Those with cards marked "LIE" must lie. Those with cards marked "TRUTH" must tell the truth. Ask them to stand single file, go back into the classroom and stand at the front of the room. Ask one person in the classroom to ask the volunteers the questions. Each person must answer all of the questions. Instruct the class to take notes on the volunteers' verbal and nonverbal communication and determine whether they are lying or telling the truth.

After all of the questions have been asked, allow the volunteers to join the class.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Who do you believe was lying? Why?
2. Who do you believe was telling the truth? Why?
3. What does this exercise tell you about verbal and

nonverbal communication? (Hopefully that the two must match in order to have credibility.)

Allow the volunteers to tell the class what their cards said.

*** Variations** You could vary the questions or allow the class to brainstorm questions before the volunteers come back into the room.

Remarks: A decrease in credibility occurs whenever the verbal message does not correspond with the nonverbal message, or vice versa. Verbal indicators of dishonesty include hesitation in answering, awkward pauses and any inconsistency in the answer. Nonverbal indicators of deception include a lack of direct eye contact, any nervous movement of the feet, nervous movement of the hands, and increased vocal speed.

References:

Knapp, Mark L. and Judith A. Hall. *Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction*. 3rd ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKER

Learning Goals:

- To assess effective and ineffective characteristics of a public speaker
- To evaluate your own strengths and weaknesses as a speaker

Level: ●

Group Size: 1 or more students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Have the students divide a sheet of paper into two columns. Label one column "Characteristics of an Effective Public Speaker." Label the other column "Characteristics of an Ineffective Public Speaker." In the columns, have the students list and briefly explain what they believe to be the five most important characteristics of effective and ineffective speakers.

On the basis of those lists, ask the students to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses as speakers and identify the three primary aspects of speech making they most want to improve.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What are some of the characteristics you listed in the "Characteristics of an Effective Public Speaker" column? Why do you think those characteristics make a speaker effective?

2. What are some of the characteristics you listed in the "Characteristics of an Ineffective Public Speaker" column? Why do you think those characteristics make a speaker ineffective?

3. Please record the three aspects of speech making you most want to improve on an index card and keep them in mind when you practice and present.

*** Variations**

If you have limited time, you could ask the students to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses as a speaker. They could identify the three primary aspects of speech making they want to improve and explain how improving those areas will make them more effective speakers.

You could also do the first part of the exercise as a group activity. Have them brainstorm which attributes make a speaker effective and ineffective. Ask them to give examples.

Remarks:

People may value different characteristics in a speaker. One person might say "sense of humor," while another might say "someone I'm sure I can trust." Students may like different delivery styles, but they all want the presenter to be well informed, to be honest, to use sound evidence and to employ valid reasoning.

References:

Lucas, Stephen E. *The Art of Public Speaking*. New York: Random House, 1989.

DETERMINING AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS

Learning Goals:

- To recognize differences in audience demographics by examining what appeals to different groups
- To practice appealing to different audiences

Level: ■

Group Size: 3 to 10 students

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Bring in magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Ms.*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Cosmopolitan*.

Learning Activity:

Ask students to get together in small groups and choose five advertisements from the magazines. They are to try to determine the audience being appealed to in each advertisement and to analyze what techniques are being used (verbally and visually) to persuade buyers. How might the ads be designed for another audience?

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What did you find? Please show the class the advertisement and tell us what audience the ad would appeal to and why?

2. How would you change the ad to appeal to a different group?

3. Why is it important to tailor your message to your audience?

4. What are some of the dangers in appealing to a specific audience?

5. What do advertisements sell and why does it work?

*** Variations**

If you have limited time, you could display the advertisements and ask the class questions rather than having the students work in groups.

Remarks: You may want to encourage learners to design and circulate an audience analysis questionnaire.

References:

Lucas, Stephen E. *The Art of Public Speaking*. 3rd ed. New York: Random House, 1989.

ARTICULATION TONGUE TWISTERS

Learning Goals: • To refine and practice articulating

Level: ●

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 10 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Write on a flipchart or prepare a handout containing the following statements:

a. Which wily wizard wished wicked wishes for Willy?
b. The sixth sick Sheik's sheep is sick.
c. Fetch me the finest French-fried freshest fish that Finney fries.
d. Shy Sarah saw six Swiss wrist watches.
e. One year we had a Christmas brunch with Merry Christmas mush to munch. But I don't think you'd care for such. We didn't like to munch much mush.

Learning Activity:

Have the students try these tongue twisters. Have them start by saying them slowly and firmly so that each sound is clearly formed. Gradually increase to the normal rate of speech.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Why is it important to articulate?
2. Did it help to practice? If not, how could you increase the effectiveness of your message (choose words which are easy to understand and articulate)?

*** Variations** You could ask students to form two teams. Have them name their team and select their first spokesperson. The spokesperson must be different each time. Write a phrase on a flip chart or board. Have each team take turns annunciating the phrase. Each team spokesperson who can say the phrase at a normal rate of speed and clearly annunciate each word earns a point for his or her team.

Remarks: None

References:

Lucas, Stephen E. *The Art of Public Speaking*. 3rd ed. New York: Random House, 1989.

THE INFLUENCE OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Learning Goals:

- To recognize nonverbal communication
- To understand more fully the influence of nonverbal communication

Level: ●

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 30 - 40 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Videotape a ten-minute segment of a television drama. Videotape a ten-minute segment of a television comedy.

Learning Activity:

Show the video segments to the class. Ask the learners to analyze what the characters say with their dress, gestures and facial expressions.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. How do the nonverbal messages in the two video tapes differ?
2. How does nonverbal communication influence the message?
3. How can you monitor your own nonverbal communication? (videotape yourself, watch yourself in the mirror)

*** Variations**

Have each learner observe someone else in the class over a short period of time. The observer should take notes on his or her subject's unconscious nonverbal communication, noting the influence that communication has on the message.

Show a video excerpt from a famous speech (e.g. the Presidential Address) and have the class analyze the speaker's nonverbal communication as a class.

Remarks: Help the class to recognize that most people don't see hairstyle and dress as sending nonverbal messages.

According to DeVito and Hecht, authors of *The Nonverbal Communication Reader*, 60% of the communication of meaning is done nonverbally and nonverbal messages are on the whole more believable than verbal messages.

References:

DeVito, Joseph A. and Michael L. Hecht. *The Nonverbal Communication Reader*. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1990.

Intercultural Communication

"There is...no more noble calling than to help the people of the world live together in peace and understanding with a fully developed spirit of inquiry about other cultures and other ways."[6]

The United States, frequently referred to as a "melting pot," presents a unique mixture of cultures in both the workplace and the community. "Culture" can refer to differences in gender, race, religion, social status, or education. With society's move toward a global market, it is increasingly important for everyone to have not only a tolerance, but also an understanding of other cultures, their beliefs and their values. The activities in this section are intended to provide students with opportunities to evaluate first their own cultural backgrounds and then to use this awareness to better understand cultures which are different from their own.

The Intercultural Communication activities fall into four main categories: awareness of one's own culture, awareness of other cultures (including those existing in the workplace), nonverbal communication techniques, and language simplification. An awareness of their own and other cultures helps students to define and recognize their culture's place among those of the world. Understanding nonverbal communication enables students to react appropriately to nonverbal cultural "cues" which may indicate either a lack of understanding or discomfort. Language simplification gives students tools for reducing miscommunication with non-native English speakers.

The goal of these activities is to help students feel confident when they encounter people from unfamiliar cultures. Students will be more open to new ideas, different perspectives, and varying points of view. In the community and in the workplace, this openness will promote healthier relationships and better communication.

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[6] Knight, John M. and Kohls, L. Robert. *Developing Intercultural Awareness: A Cross-Cultural Training Handbook* (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1994), p. ix.

INTERCULTURAL ICEBREAKER

Learning Goals:

- To establish the importance of intercultural communication
- To initiate openness in the first class

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 3 minutes per student

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Have each student write about either an intercultural experience or about his/her own cultural background. Afterwards, have students introduce themselves by sharing this information.

*** Discussion Questions** None

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity usually establishes the need for intercultural communication and facilitates student interactions.

References: None

DEFINING CULTURE

Learning Goals: • To analyze what culture comprises

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 15 - 25 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask the class to write down their definition of culture. List the definition(s) on the board.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What are the different components of a culture?
2. Which do we notice immediately? . Which do we notice after more time?
3. How would you describe your culture?

*** Variations** Have the class focus on a few specific cultures and ask the students to list what they "know" about those cultures.

Remarks: This activity is most appropriate in a first class.

References: None

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Learning Goals:

- To introduce nonverbal communication and its usefulness in communicating with people from other cultures
- To raise students' awareness of what they and others communicate nonverbally

Level: ●

Group Size: 5 or more students

Time: 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Index cards with students' names on them

Learning Activity:

After addressing discussion question #1 below, give each student a card with another student's name on it. Ask each student to observe that student's body language during the activity. Speak to individual students in a foreign language or in a made-up language. Ask them questions in the foreign language and wait for replies. Speak louder than usual.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What is nonverbal communication and why is it important in a class about intercultural communication?
2. How did you feel while the trainer was speaking?
3. What did you notice about the body language of the participant you observed?
4. What signs of discomfort, understanding, etc. should you look for when you are speaking to someone of another culture?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: None

References: None

EMOTION CARDS

Learning Goals:
- To raise awareness about how much we are able to communicate nonverbally
- To understand differences in the ways other cultures express emotions

Level: ■

Group Size: 4 or more students

Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Index cards with emotions written on them

Learning Activity:

Hand out an "emotion" card: angry, tired, nervous, etc. to each student. Have them use body language to demonstrate the emotion and have the class guess which emotion is being demonstrated.

• Discussion Questions

1. How easy/difficult was it to guess the emotion?
2. What differences might exist in the ways other cultures express emotions?

• Variations Hand out index cards with short expressions on them (e.g. I need to make a phone call; Check, please; What time is it?; Are you thirsty?; Come here, etc.) Have the students use nonverbal communication to portray the information on the card.

Remarks: This activity helps the students to realize the extent of information that they are able to communicate despite possible language barriers.

References: None

SIMPLIFYING LANGUAGE

Learning Goals:
- To recognize the importance of simplifying language for non-native English speakers

Level: ■

Group Size: Any

Time: 15 - 25 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask each participant to write a note to an English-speaking co-worker about a designated topic (e.g. the computer network is down, instructions on how to handle the situation, and estimated time frame for operation.) Discuss the contents of the notes and what might not be understood by a non-native English speaker. Have the class re-write the note for a non-native English speaker. Discuss the changes made.

*** Discussion Questions** None

*** Variations** Give the class a list of expressions which are in complex language (e.g. She articulated her opinion; Where is it located?; My nasal passages are extremely congested; My living quarters are in a state of disarray.) Have them rework the expressions to be more easily understood by a non-native English speaker.

Remarks: None

References: None

SPECIAL LANGUAGE

Learning Goals:

- To identify slang, acronyms, and idiomatic expressions
- To understand why using these expressions confuses non-native English speakers

Level: ■

Group Size: Any

Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Address the three types of special language (slang, acronyms, and idiomatic expressions) separately. First, see if the class is able to define each term. Then come up with as many examples as possible.

Slang terms:	cool, far out, rad, gnarly, hot, pinhead, whipped, square, hip, right on
Acronyms:	ER, CIA, OR, NBC, VP, QA, ASAP, PC, TQM
Idiomatic expressions:	It's over my head; you're pulling my leg; the straw that broke the camel's back; sleep like a log; high as a kite; on the ball; out in left field; icing on the cake; the cat's out of the bag; on cloud 9.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Which of these special terms would confuse a non-native English speaker?
2. Why should we not use them if we are trying to communicate with people from another culture?
3. What special language is used by your company, department, field?

*** Variations**

Have students rephrase the idiomatic expressions so that they are understandable for a non-native English speaker.

Remarks: This activity can be used as a brainstorming session as well.

References: None

STEREOTYPES OF OTHER CULTURES

Learning Goals:
- To identify what stereotypes are and where they originate
- To evaluate the validity of stereotypes

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 20 - 40 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Comments on Americans*

Learning Activity:

Ask the class to define the word "stereotypes". Have them come up with some stereotypes for other cultures: French, Irish, Italian, Japanese, German, Mexican, men, women, etc. Follow with a discussion on the stereotypes of Americans.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Where do these stereotypes come from? (e.g. literature, cartoons, media, films, etc.)
2. Are most of them positive or negative?
3. What are the advantages/disadvantages to stereotyping?

Hand out the comments on Americans:

1. Do you agree/disagree with the comments about Americans from the handout?
2. What do these comments indicate about the culture who made the comment?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: None

References:

Kohls, Robert L. and Knight, John M. *Developing Intercultural Awareness, A Cross-Cultural Training Handbook*. Intercultural Press, Inc. 2nd ed. 1994.

COMMENTS ON AMERICANS

Visitor from India:

Americans seem to be in a perpetual hurry. Just watch the way they walk down the street. They never allow themselves the leisure to enjoy life; there are too many things to do.

Visitor from Japan:

Family life in the U.S. seems harsh and unfeeling compared to the close ties in our country. Americans don't seem to care for their elderly parents.

Visitor from Colombia:

The tendency in the U.S. to think that life is only work hits you in the face. Work seems to be the one motivation.

Visitor from Kenya:

In American schools, the children are restless, inattentive, and rebellious [and the teachers have] poor class discipline.

Visitor from Taiwan:

Before I came to America, I always heard how hardworking Americans are, but compared to my people they don't seem to work very hard at all. Why, Americans only work five days a week!

Adapted from Kohls, Robert L. And Knight, John M. *Develping Intercultural Awareness. A Cross-Cultural Training Handbook*

COMMON GROUND

Learning Goals:
- To learn which topics are easy to discuss with a person of another culture

Level: ■

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Have students divide into pairs. One student represents a "city person", the other a "country person". As a class, come up with a list of the characteristics of both cultures. Neither has ventured beyond his/her environment before. In pairs, have the partners engage in a conversation which is of interest to both cultures.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What did you discuss?
2. What did you have in common?
3. Thinking of this activity in light of intercultural communication, what areas would probably be "safe" to speak about with all cultures (e.g. culture, family, food, traditions)?
4. Which topics might be emotionally "charged" for all cultures (e.g. sex, politics, religion)?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: None

References: None

MONOCHRONIC/POLYCHRONIC TIME

Learning Goals:

- To understand how Americans view time and how it affects their values, their work, and their lives
- To evaluate the strengths/weaknesses of their own time system and that of other cultures

Level: ●

Group Size: Any

Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask students if they know the difference between monochronic and polychronic time. If not, explain monochronic means *linear* and polychronic means *at the same time*. Draw a linear model and a concentric circle model to illustrate the point. Write a list of various items which need to be worked into a daily schedule in an allotted amount of time on the board. Have half of the students arrange the schedule using monochronic time. Have the other half use polychronic time.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Which view of time do Americans have?
2. What are the advantages/disadvantages of monochronic and polychronic time?
3. How might these different views affect a person's workplace interactions?

*** Variations** Have the class come up with a typical day's schedule. Then have them decide whether the schedule they created illustrates monochronic or polychronic time.

Remarks: None

References: None

THE WORKPLACE CULTURE

Learning Goals:

- To identify the unique culture(s) that exist at the students' workplace
- To discuss the challenges that these different cultures present

Level: ■

Group Size: Any

Time: 20 - 40 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Ask the students to define culture. Have them come up with a list of the different cultures that exist at their workplace.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What are the different characteristics of each culture?
2. What problems/issues arise because of these differences?
3. What should you try to understand and respect about each of the cultures?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: This activity is usually very enlightening and helps students to address some workplace issues that they usually do not speak about.

References: None

CULTURAL TRADITIONS

Learning Goals:
- To understand the importance of customs and traditions to a culture

Level: ●

Group Size: 3 or more students

Time: 3 minutes per student

Preparation and Materials: None

Learning Activity:

Have each student write down as many cultural traditions as he/she can think of (e.g. wedding traditions, holiday traditions, etc.) List on the board the various customs that the students thought of and ask the group to brainstorm for additional traditions.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. Do you know the origin of this tradition?
2. Does your family have any unique traditions of its own?
3. How important are these traditions to you?
4. How might these traditions appear to people from another culture who are unfamiliar with them?

*** Variations:** None

Remarks: The point of this discussion is to illustrate that our customs/traditions might appear strange to people from other cultures and yet they are very important to us and ingrained in our lives. We should remember this when learning about the traditions and customs of other cultures.

References: None

LEMON EXCHANGE

Learning Goals:

- To illustrate the importance of individual differences
- To recognize the need for observational skills and sensitivity to personal characteristics

Level: ●

Group Size: 6 or more students

Time: 15 - 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: A sufficient quantity of lemons (or an appropriate substitute like potatoes)

Learning Activity:

Distribute one lemon to each student. Ask each student to examine his/her lemon carefully by rolling it, squeezing it, etc. Ask the students to "get to know their lemon" and to give their lemon a name. Encourage them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their lemon. Collect all the lemons and visibly mix them up in front of the group. Spread the lemons out on a table, and ask everyone to come forward and select their original lemon. It is amazing how many people can recover their original lemon.

***Discussion Questions**

1. How many of you are sure you recovered your original lemon? How do you know?
2. How do you differentiate between lemons? people? Are the methods different?
3. How does this relate to understanding different communication styles?

***Variations** None

Remarks: If conflicts develop over their choices, assist the parties in reconciling their differences, or simply note their failure to agree and use that as a basis for later discussion.

References: None

QUOTATIONS ON INTERCULTURAL EXPLORATION

Learning Goals:

- To introduce participants to the need for intercultural understanding
- To help the instructor understand students' interests related to intercultural communication

Level: ●

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 30 - 60 minutes

Preparation and Materials:

Handout *Demographic Changes*
Handout *Comments on American Culture*
Handout *Intercultural Communication and Business*
Handout *Thoughts on the need for Intercultural Communication Skills: Business*
Handout *Need to Work Effectively in a Diverse Environment...*

Learning Activity:

Pass out the quotations or show them on the overhead. Ask the students to select the quotations that interest or intrigue them the most. Ask students to write for 3 minutes about why they selected certain quotations or ask them to discuss their selections in small groups.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What does intercultural communication have to do with your life?

2. Can you think of a situation in which you needed to communicate effectively with someone from a different culture? What could have helped you to communicate more effectively?

*** Variations** None

Remarks: None

References: None

Demographic Changes

- **Among the top 25 urban markets throughout the U.S., people of color now make up the majority of the population in 16.** D&B: Donnelly Demographics top 25 ADIs 1988.

- **Over the next 20 years, the U.S. population is expected to grow by 42 million. Hispanics will account for 47 percent of this growth. Blacks will account for 22 percent. Asians and other people of color will make up 18 percent of this increase, while whites will account for only 13 percent.** Chicago Tribune, Jan. 2, 1990

Comments on American Culture

"The only thing Americans have in common is a fondness for ice water."
Mark Twain

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Intercultural Communication and Business

- ✦ One out of six U.S. manufacturing jobs is dependent on foreign trade, while four out of five new manufacturing jobs result from international commerce.
- ✦ Premature return of an employee and family sent on overseas assignment may cost the company between $50,000 to $200,000 when replacement expenses are included.
- ✦ 80% of U.S. industry faces international competition.

(from *Managing Cultural Differences*. Harris and Moran 3rd Ed. 1991)

Thoughts on the Need for Intercultural Communication Skills: Business

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US Department of Education

- "I came, I saw, I blundered... for work across cultures, it's harder than it looks." Time, Oct 9, 1989. Quoted in Managing Cultural Differences. Harris & Moran, p. 3.
- "...in order to capitalize on the globalization of commerce...American managers will have to think beyond the borders of the United States." John S. McClenhen, Senior International Editor of *Industry Week*
- Tomorrow's executives must possess a broad understanding of history, of culture, of technology, and of human relations. They must be as comfortable with cash management as with history, anthropology, sociology, mathematics and with the physical and natural sciences." Louis Korn, CEO of a leading executive search firm

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We live in a fantastic century. I leave aside the incredible discoveries of science, the narrow ridge between doom and fulfillment onto which they have pushed us, and speak only of the new situation among peoples. Lands across the planet have become neighbors, China across the street, Egypt at our doorstep. Radio and air traffic have shriveled space until the only barrier is cost... We hear on all sides that East and West are meeting but it is an understatement. They are flung at one another, hurled with the force of atoms, the speed of jets, the restlessness of minds impatient to learn of ways that differ from their own. From the perspective of history this may prove to be the most important fact about the twentieth century. When historians look back upon our years they may remember them not for the release of nuclear power nor the spread of Communism but as the time in which all peoples of the world first had to take one another seriously. (Huston Smith, The Religions of Man. 1986. p. 9)

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Need to Work Effectively in a Diverse Environment...

- "The world in which we live is far too competitive to pass up available resources. You'll not win races for long, firing only half the cylinders in your engine... In my opinion, the only way to be competitive is to use all the talent you can muster, no matter how it is packaged. Jack MacAllister, former Chairman, U.S. West quoted in Workforce America! Loden/Rosener 1991.
- "Traditionally, intercultural communication took place only among an extremely small proportion of the world populace. Ministers of state, certain merchants, missionaries, explorers, and a few tourists were primarily the travelers and visitors to foreign lands... This situation, of course, has changed markedly; we are now a mobile society among ever increasing mobile societies ...Intercultural Communication, A Reader. Samovar and Proter p. 1

Intercultural Communication 13f

FORCES THAT SHAPE IDENTITY

Learning Goals:
- To understand the major factors which influenced the development of participants' identities

Level: ■

Group Size: 2 or more students

Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Handout *Forces that Shape Identity*
Diagram: *Influence on Cultural Identity*

Learning Activity:

Distribute the handout *Forces that Shape Identity* to participants. Allow 10 minutes for participants to complete the questions. In small groups, have participants diagram the forces that were influences on the establishment of their identity. Ask each small group to present their "Forces that Shape Identity" Diagram.

*** Discussion Questions**

1. What external forces were similar and shared by nearly all participants?
2. What forces had greater influence in some cultures (such as the role of political parties or the extended family) and less influence in other cultures?

*** Variations**

Rather than handing out "Forces that Shape Identity", ask the participants to generate their own questions. In addition to the ones on the handout, these may include:

How have you learned about your culture? (TV, family, stories, newspaper articles)

What do you remember most about your favorite holiday or tradition growing up?

Do you remember when you learned that your culture was different from another culture? How did you learn this?

Remarks: None

References:

Collier, Mary Jane. *Cultural Identity and Intercultural Communication.* in Samovar and Porter, 7th edition. 1994.

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Forces that Shape Identity

- Where did you live growing up? How did that shape who you are today?

- As a child, what event had a major influence on your life? What adult had a major influence?

- What forces have influenced you decisions related to education and your choice of work?

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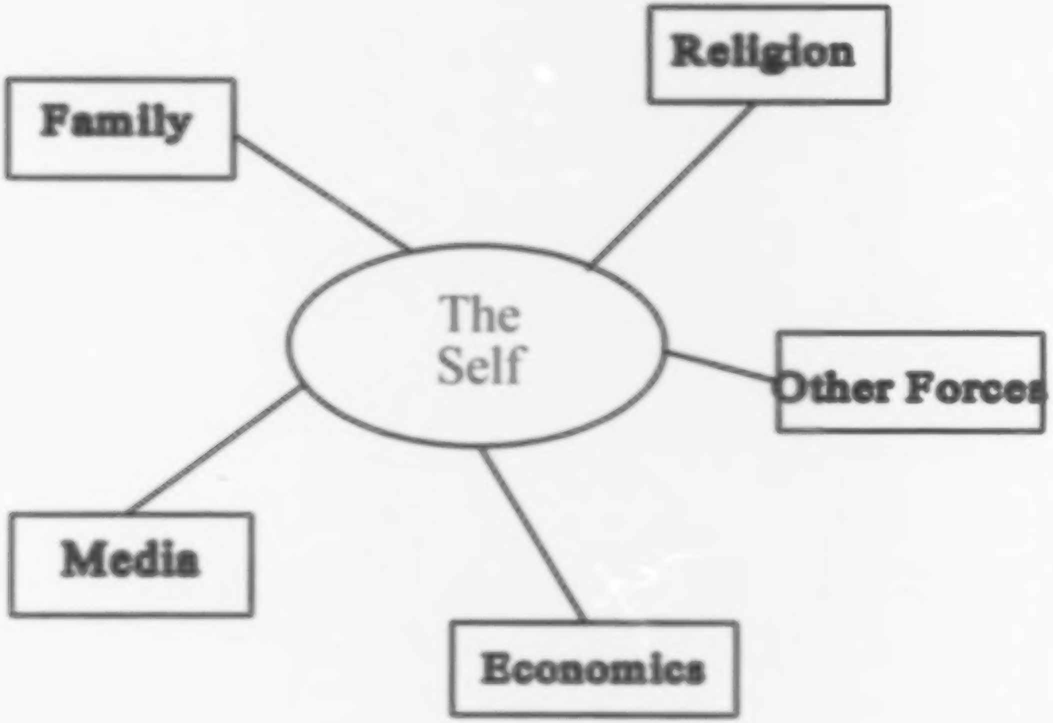
Forces that Shape Identity- Sample Diagram



Family
Religion
The Self
Other Forces
Media
Economics

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